



Minutes of the  
**Meeting of the  
Executive Committee**  
of the  
**World Council of Churches**

**17 - 20 February 1998**

**Meeting held at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey  
Céligny, Switzerland**



**EX/1/98**

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# World Council of Churches

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

held at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland

17 - 20 February 1998

### 1. OPENING ACTIONS

#### A. Worship

Worship took place each morning in the Chapel of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, led by members of the Executive Committee and staff.

#### B. Opening Actions

On Tuesday 17 February 1998, the Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, opened this session of the WCC Executive Committee. After welcoming participants as sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ, he reminded them that this was an important stage in our ecumenical pilgrimage towards the ecumenical goal. Two major tasks were on the agenda: firstly, consideration of the organisational, structural and constitutional aspects of the implications of the Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC (CUV), and secondly, preparations for the Eighth Assembly.

#### C. Roll Call

The General Secretary called the roll, noting apologies for absence from a number of members, including Vice-Moderator Rev. Nélide Ritchie. Ms Tungane Williams was seated as substitute for Rev. Valamotu Palu; Fr Hilarion Alfeyev and Fr Ion Bria were present as consultants.

#### D. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held at the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, 9-10 September 1997, were **approved** as circulated.

#### E. Adoption of Agenda and Timetable

The General Secretary presented the proposed agenda which was **adopted**.

## 2. REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dr Raiser began by expressing regret at the number of absences, many of which were for health reasons.

He informed members of the death on 30 January of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, one of the most significant figures in the ecumenical movement since the early days of the World Council. Bishop Newbigin had been general secretary of the International Missionary Council before it integrated with the WCC at New Delhi in 1961, and became the first director of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism until he returned to India as Bishop of Madras (Church of South India).

The period since the meeting of Central Committee in September 1997 had been very intensive: staff were increasingly involved in detailed preparations for the Assembly, while at the same time moving ahead with the process of internal reorganisation.

Reference was made to the **consultation on sexual orientation** held in September: an aide-mémoire on this initiative had been shared with members of the Executive. The January 1998 issue of *The Ecumenical Review* on the subject of homosexuality included reference to the consultation and the conclusions drawn. Two proposals had emerged: (1) that in connection with the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the assembly issue a declaration which would include a reaffirmation of the long-standing commitment of the WCC to the struggle against all forms of discrimination; (2) that although so far the Council had focused on issues of social ethics, there was a growing conviction that it must find ways of addressing the highly sensitive issues of personal morality, including those related to human sexuality, and develop ways of initiating such a discussion.

In December 1997 a meeting took place of **representatives of the PCPCU** (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) **and the WCC** in an attempt to clarify future collaboration in the areas of Faith and Order, and Mission and Evangelism. PCPCU colleagues had been concerned lest the WCC's future structure affect their participation in these areas of long-standing cooperation. Since then the report of the JWG had been finalised for presentation to the two parent bodies.

An interim summary of the discussion on the proposed **Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations** had been prepared following up the Central Committee discussion on the subject. Julio de Santa Ana was acting as a consultant, working further on the matter in preparation for the assembly. Dr Raiser felt it would be useful to invite a small group of representatives of key partners for a meeting if possible prior to



September 1998, to formulate a proposal that would be owned by the partners rather than by the WCC. Such a proposal could be considered by the governing bodies and the respective partners to give a mandate to the Central and Executive Committees.

The Central Committee had requested the Executive, before the assembly, to design and implement a procedure for conducting a **dialogue on the Orthodox Churches' participation in the life of the WCC**. An analysis had been prepared by the Orthodox Task Force which was on the agenda for discussion during this meeting.

Other **meetings** that had taken place since September included a concluding session on developing dialogue with Pentecostal communities in November, and a Heads of Agencies meeting in Toronto, following up earlier encounters, with representatives of donor and partner agencies. This process of mutual consultation would continue, using the round table model. Several staff had been invited to the first meeting of the new CEC Central Committee; a proposal was acted on to establish a coordinating group with the WCC on common concerns in the European region, along the model of those with CLAI and CCA. Finally, the last meeting of the Faith and Order Board was held in January, when proposals were made for the re-shaping of Faith and Order bylaws, and an official response was sent to the Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*.

The General Secretary concluded with reports on **visits** he had made to member churches in Australia, India and Moscow. A written report on the latter had been shared with members of the Executive. Dr Raiser expressed thanks to Metropolitan Kirill for planning the visit and for the wide range of encounters that had been made possible.

The visit to Australia had coincided with a national debate there regarding legislation on Aboriginal land rights, which provided high media interest in view of the WCC's previous action on the issue. He had given a number of interviews which he hoped had helped provide support to the Australian churches as they engaged in the struggle.

### Discussion

Metropolitan Kirill expressed gratitude to Dr Raiser and his colleagues for their visit to Moscow which had demanded much courage, wisdom and energy. The visit had been timely and useful.

The problem being faced was both internal to Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), maybe also to the majority of Orthodox Churches, but it was also a WCC problem. The two bodies should coordinate their efforts to influence the situation in Russia and other Orthodox countries. The visit had helped them understand the importance of inculturation for the internal situation of the ROC. Another dimension concerned the theological and ecclesiological considerations of Orthodox participation

in the WCC. Although many remembered the assistance given to the churches in Russia by the WCC in the communist era, at the same time they were anxious to clarify the nature of what membership in the WCC meant so that it could become more understandable for the people. This discussion must be developed in the Orthodox Church but the WCC must be sensitive to their problems and provide some means to respond to the questions posed from theological perspectives. The ecumenical movement required new inspiration and vision for the 21st century.

The discussion on CUV had been a first step but it was not sufficiently inspiring - there was no really new vision. If the ROC were to embark on the search for a new vision of ecumenism and an understanding of the nature of its participation in the ecumenical movement, there must be some response to the critical questions posed by the Orthodox, so that we can be witnesses in the 21st century of the great Truth, that the world may believe.

The Moderator assured Metropolitan Kirill that these issues were indeed being taken up, and a process was beginning which would provide space for discussing questions of mutual concern with mutual understanding, openness and respect. This process of dialogue would go beyond the assembly.

Ms Odonkor was encouraged by Dr Raiser's report about the land-rights struggle in Australia; it would be helpful for people in Africa facing similar issues to know that they were not alone in their struggle for justice.

Dr Tolen asked whether there had been discussion of burning issues such as proselytism and homosexuality during the general secretary's visit to Moscow. The issue had been taboo in many cultures and had therefore not been discussed even in the churches, but it was time to undertake a study on the subject, even if conclusions were not likely to be reached for some time.

Responding, Dr Raiser said that both questions were mentioned in conversations with the ROC. Proselytism was clearly rejected. On the question of uniatism, there had been an agreement to send a joint ROC/RCC delegation to the Ukraine in order to reach an understanding of the issues in a positive way.

The question of homosexuality was seen as an area of genuine concern on the part of the ROC, especially in view of developments in some WCC member churches. The Council had made every effort to create a space where exchange and mutual acknowledgement could take place and would continue to do this throughout the assembly. It appeared that most gays and lesbians in Southern Africa were not interested in creating a confrontation situation at the assembly; they recognise the dilemma the WCC is in, and would prefer



to find ways to facilitate a responsible ecumenical discussion.

Secondly, in Dr Tolen's view, the question to be dealt with in the new millennium would increasingly be: what did it mean to be a Christian today? This became more difficult in a more secularised world. For example, what happened when human rights seemed to conflict with Christian norms? Could democracy only be described as good if it was in line with Christian values?

Dr Aagaard noted that a concerted effort was taking place among LWF, WARC and the WCC to reformulate theological statements on human rights, in order to make some distinction between the common good discourse and the moral discourse.

Dr Raiser noted that the WCC had been involved in an evaluation of human rights and was beginning to realise the dangers inherent in the discourse - in particular whether human rights were being reduced to a set of claims by individuals over against the community rather than to protect those who were unable to protect themselves. There were indications of a growing recognition of the potential one-sidedness of the human rights discourse.

Bishop Anderson referred to his visit to Australia some 25 years ago on behalf of PCR when the situation had been very discouraging, and asked whether things had improved since then. Dr Raiser affirmed that there had been significant progress during recent years: the High Court had acknowledged that there were basic titles of Aboriginal people, and legislation had been introduced providing a legal framework for recognising the land rights of Aboriginal people. Secondly, the High Court had rules that Aboriginal titles and pastoral lease titles could co-exist in relation to the same piece of land. This caused protest among the farming community who feared that Aboriginal titles could over-rule rights granted to them for farming land. The present government charter cut back on native title legislation which led to the current national debate on the issue.

### **3. INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE WCC**

The General Secretary reminded members of the Executive that the Central Committee had approved an outline for the new programme and management structure at its meeting in September 1997, instructing staff to develop it further and present a comprehensive plan to this meeting of the Executive Committee, with the understanding that it would be further developed in the period up to September. A Staff Group for Internal Organisation (SGIO) had been formed to undertake this process.

## A. Survey of Team Profiles

The staff group's mandate was to work out in greater detail the profiles of each of the teams to be formed as part of the new structure. These profiles were subsequently to serve as the basis for determining the allocation of human and financial resources to the four clusters and the various teams.

In developing the profiles, the staff group was guided by the distinction between "ongoing" activities under the specific responsibility of a given team, and "time-defined" activities. *Ongoing activities* are those linked to monitoring developments in a particular area of ecumenical concern; maintaining contacts with and offering advisory services to member churches and ecumenical partners; promoting study, research and analysis; and providing necessary services for regularly scheduled events.

*Time-defined activities* included both short-term specific projects under the responsibility of a given team and common priority areas of work in which staff from several teams cooperate. It was important to bear in mind that the proposed structure was based on the assumption that the work of the Council as well as its human and financial resources should in future be focused on a limited number of major tasks or projects, normally undertaken for a definite period of time, with clear objectives, and drawing on the competence of several teams. These activities, which would be mandated by the governing bodies and would reflect agreed priorities, would emerge from the policy guidelines to be formulated by the Assembly and implemented by the Central Committee through the Programme and Executive Committees.

An evaluation of the activities of the Council during the period since the Canberra Assembly was shared with the Central Committee at its 1997 meeting. Some initial suggestions for future priorities had emerged - both "time-defined" activities by particular teams, and projects requiring the cooperation of several teams. While these suggestions would be included in the presentations to be made to the hearings at the forthcoming assembly, specific indications of such priority areas of future work can only be given after the assembly. Thus the profiles at this point included only some tentative examples of "time-defined" activities, mostly referring to specific projects planned by a given team. In determining the allocation of human and financial resources, provision must be made for responding to future priorities mandated by governing bodies following the assembly. The new structure was intended to facilitate an ongoing process of monitoring agreed priorities and evaluating activities which have reached the appointed timeline.

In outlining the team profiles, the staff group also specified forms of work or methodologies to be used in each area of activity and indicated the main partners within



the WCC and externally with whom particular activities would be carried out. Since they reflected the new style of work which the internal structure was intended to facilitate, it should be noted that all teams characterize their forms of work along the following lines:

- (1) to maintain regular contacts with specific partners through correspondence and visits;
- (2) to build and support networks among ecumenical partners;
- (3) to introduce concerns into the work of Round Tables and Regional Groups;
- (4) to monitor developments in their area of responsibility and to gather, interpret and disseminate information;
- (5) to promote study, research and analysis;
- (6) to provide advisory services to member churches and ecumenical partners;
- (7) to develop, with the support of the Communication Cluster, effective ways of communication through electronic media, newsletters, publications etc.;
- (8) to cooperate with the team for income coordination and development in cultivating funding sources, especially for time-defined activities.

The interactive and cooperative style of work was also reflected through the indications about partners with whom the activities would be carried out. A clear pattern emerged, with all teams mentioning the following main partners:

- (1) other teams or clusters within the WCC;
- (2) specialized offices, agencies and centres within member churches;
- (3) ecumenical partners such as NCCs, REOs, CWCs and specialized international ecumenical organizations, as well as churches which are not WCC members (in particular counterparts in the Roman Catholic Church);
- (4) particular networks in their area of responsibility.

Close coordination between the teams would of course be essential in relating to the main external partners.

It would be the responsibility of the future Staff Leadership Group to foster this new style of work and to ensure that activities in the areas of issues and those focusing on relations remain closely linked.

In discussion, a number of points were raised for clarification.

Dr Aagaard underlined the importance of this new way of working together: it was essential that the task of promoting the human side of a new work ethos be achieved, otherwise the attempt to improve the structure would fail.

Regarding the place of *diakonia*, Ms Blyth referred to the way in which this had evolved, noting that it was now the intention that resource sharing take place across all the clusters



and teams. It was hoped that the newly defined regional teams would give an impetus to opening up platforms for dialogue and sharing, moving away from the concept of individual projects towards a broader strategic diakonia.

Dr Kässmann warned that agencies were uneasy about this multilateral approach to sharing because they were not sure where they would relate to in the future; some were considering switching to a bilateral approach. How could this be avoided?

Ms Rantakari noted that greater flexibility was built into the new organisational pattern, and that a change of style and mentality was beginning to take place.

Dr Raiser agreed that on the part of staff a new understanding of their role was necessary so that they would see themselves in relation to each other rather than as a hierarchical structure of specialists as had been the case so far. This was a major undertaking, and neither the Council nor most of its member churches had any experience in such a move away from a traditional institutional mentality. He urged the Executive to give its support to these plans, which were a way of responding to the challenge of the 21st century and the new requirements that would be demanded. The nature of this challenge led to the realisation that competent advice would be necessary during this period of transition, so Dr Morgan Gould had been invited to assist in the process. He has begun to work out with the Management Team a process which would go beyond the assembly.

## **B. Process for Staffing Profiles**

Ms Mary Ann Lundy presented the paper setting out this process, noting that while profiles for Clusters and Issues were being developed, processes were being considered that would lead to staffing profiles.

The Staff Management Team became aware that they were moving towards an in-depth process of change that would necessitate a change of ethos, of work culture, of style; in short, the WCC was not only in a process of structural reorganization but of organizational change. Assistance was coming in the form of Dr Morgan Gould, who had agreed to make his services available as consultant to the WCC over the next 2 years. Dr Gould had had broad experience with international agencies and governments. His commitment was to “accompany “ staff in the change process through December 1999.

The Management Team had held a first “learning conference” with Dr Gould in order to share what had been learned from the last restructuring in 1991/92 and to gain some understanding of the current process of change. The task today was more comprehensive than in the past - embracing vision, structure, resources and styles of work. An integrated approach was suggested, involving the development of strategy, determination of tasks,

team structure, organizational efficiency, decision-making and management functions. There was a determination to effect a process of change that would value the care of persons, sensitivity to attitudes, accountability in the use of resources, and transparency of communication, enabling all staff to own the vision of the future.

In December 1997, the emerging team profiles were presented to the Officers' meeting and were also considered by the Finance Strategy Working Group.

The next step was to determine the number of staff needed to carry out the work outlined in the team profiles. The Deputy General Secretary led a consultative process with cluster coordinators and team leaders when necessary, to work out the number of staff needed - both administrative and executive - based on an estimate of full-time equivalents (FTEs), but not including consultants or seconded staff.

The total number of FTEs - was estimated to be 166.5, which would approximate an estimated cost of CHF 19,600,000. While detailed analysis would alter these figures to some degree, they were within the parameters set as an approximate percentage for salaries of the total projected general income for 1998 and beyond. While the total figures were derived from analyzing team profiles and tasks, they were not yet complete enough to be shared publicly. After the Executive, more detailed work would be done on tasks and hours needed to carry out projected work, as well as determining competencies needed for positions in order to finalize job profiles.

Another small group representing cluster leadership and administrative staff had spent two sessions with the consultant, learning methods of work-task analysis of projected team work. Determining the competence needed for staff positions was part of this process, which would be expanded in learning sessions with all teams. As profiles of positions were sharpened, staff would be given opportunity to express their preference for particular positions.

It was hoped that this phase would be completed by the end of April. The selection process would then proceed during May and June. The Week of Meetings (end April) would be the turning point between past and future in the current transitional period. It may be the appropriate moment for one or several spiritual or liturgical events to acknowledge the past period in the WCC, expressing appreciation for it as staff open themselves to the future. The Assembly theme, "Turn to God - Rejoice in Hope", may be helpful in articulating their memories and hopes. A learning conference for all staff would be held before the summer break.

Work on the process of change was expected to continue beyond the assembly, not only in incorporating the assembly's actions, but in making real the structural changes in



refining the ways of working and living out the new understanding and vision. It was hoped to bring the results of the current process to the Officers in June, and to share a full report with the Executive in September when there would still be a possibility to make any necessary adjustments. 1998 was a transition year, but it was not considered wise to delay the implementation of the new structure to 1999, so the new leadership composition should become effective as of 1 July 1998, after which time the majority of the Council's activities would be geared towards the assembly.

In discussion, Mr Briggs stressed the importance of ensuring a clear limitation to the tasks to be undertaken by the Council in future. This would have to be done by management, but the Executive should provide assistance where necessary. One of the Council's biggest problems had been its inability to reduce the work. Dr Best agreed, but asked how decisions would be made as to what tasks would have priority, when it would appear that donors tended to decide priorities by designating their contributions?

Ms Rantakari noted that the shift in management and administration would be slower to change than the programmatic side. She felt that profiles of income management still reflected an institutional rather than an open-minded approach.

Dr Aagaard hoped that by September there would be a clearer indication of the linkages between decision-making processes in the house and those of the governing bodies. Who would be responsible for deciding priorities? What would be role of the new Programme Committee in this?

Responding, Dr Raiser affirmed that details regarding future leadership would be reported to the Executive in September. To enable staff to work in a different style and ethos, the supervision and assessment of the Executive would be necessary.

Regarding priorities, it was clear that these should not be set by donors; nevertheless, an increasing amount of the Council's resources were to some extent designated. This was why efforts were being made to involve the donor partners in working out a way of operation to enable them to see where their support was being used, and helping them understand that the WCC was responsible for setting certain priorities. Thus the interplay between decision-making and priority-setting would have to take place in Central Committee as well as in the Executive and Programme Committees. Recommendations about the termination of those programmes that have reached their objectives should be dealt with by the Programme Committee, while the Central Committee would have overall control in respect to the implementation of guidelines provided by the assembly.

The documents were referred to the three sub-committees, with the Programme Sub-Committee coordinating the recommendations.



At a later session, Dr Kässmann presented the report of the Programme Sub-committee. The following points had been noted in particular:

- competencies required, and the decision-making process;
- the need for information on the new structure for delegates and constituencies outside the WCC to be available at the latest by the assembly;
- the coordination of programmes including the definition of lines of authority;
- the question of decentralisation.

The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

*to support and encourage the direction given in the document, summarised above, in accordance with the request of Central Committee.*

The following recommendations from the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee were **agreed** as follows:

- *the Executive Committee noted with appreciation the role of the process adviser and encouraged the General Secretary to develop the process further;*
- *requested the General Secretary to report to the Officers meeting in June and to the Executive Committee in September 1998 on the progress made with the implementation of the new structure.*

### **C. Amendments to Constitution and Rules**

The General Secretary referred to the revised proposed text for changes in the Constitution and Rules relative to the re-structuring, reminding the Executive that this did not include those parts of the Rules revised by Central Committee in 1996 and which required ratification by the Assembly.

The main change in the Constitution was in Art.III, and this had been accepted by the Central Committee in 1997.

Due to lack of time, however, the Central Committee had only been able to accept in principle the proposed changes in the Rules. The main changes related to the Assembly, specifically with regard to the composition of the Business Committee, and a minor change in the Rules of Debate.

The Executive Committee should authorise the General Secretary to send those parts of the amendments which required approval by the assembly officially to the member churches giving notice of the intention to change the Constitution and Article I of the

Rules according to the amendments proposed. It would also be sent to assembly delegates who would have to vote on the proposed changes. Finally, it would also be shared with members of Central Committee for information, although the Executive had authority to act upon the changes proposed at its meeting in September 1998. (Rule changes apart from Article I did not require assembly approval; consultation with CC and final decision by the Executive was all that was required.)

The new Central Committee after its election during the assembly would have a first meeting in Harare, presided by the General Secretary, in order to elect a Nominations Committee. A second meeting, also during the assembly, would be held to elect an Executive Committee and Officers. The election of Presidents would take place at the first full meeting of the new Central Committee after the assembly.

A paper would be prepared for the newly elected members of CC explaining their immediate responsibilities and tasks to be carried out during these early meetings.

In response to questions, Dr Raiser spelled out the roles of the various advisory bodies as follows:

*The Programme Committee:* a standing committee of the Central Committee, meeting in conjunction with CC. Its task would be to present recommendations to CC regarding decisions of policy on programmes and activities, including initiation or termination of programmes. It should initiate procedures for review and evaluation of programmes and activities; it should be guided by advice from commissions, boards and advisory groups, and should assist them in the implementation of policy directions set by CC. Under the direction of CC it would appoint advisory groups for specific areas/constituencies and determines their size and frequency of meeting.

*Commissions:* advisory to the Central Committee, they report to and make recommendations through the Programme Committee. Within the policies established by CC and under direction of the Programme Committee, their task is to develop/accompany specific programmes in areas of constitutional responsibility.

*Advisory Groups:* appointed by the Programme Committee to provide it with advice in areas of continuing concern, or to represent/facilitate the participation of particular constituencies. They receive their mandate from the Programme Committee and report regularly to it.

Ms Rantakari asked whether it was wise to include in the Rules the responsibilities of the Staff Leadership Group and Staff Consultative Group; surely it was important for leadership to have flexibility to create the instruments required. The General Secretary



pointed out that the current descriptions of SEG and SCG had been added in 1992 at the time of the last restructuring.

Dr Aagaard felt this was a matter for management rather than for the governing bodies and should therefore not appear in the Rules. Dr Tolen believed however that the governing bodies should have some guidelines to help them in their task of monitoring.

With regard to Commissions, Central Committee had acted on the assumption that Faith and Order and CCIA would continue to have commissions, but it had not taken action on recommendations to continue the CWME and a commission on Education. The Executive should decide whether this decision should be left to the new CC or whether to act in the spirit of earlier recommendations and maintain four commissions for the four constitutional streams.

The document was referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

\*

At a later session, Dr Best presented the Sub-committee's report on behalf of Dr Nababan, who was moderating the session.

Dr Raiser referred to the earlier discussion on whether or not to include reference to internal staff leadership by spelling out the roles of the SLG and SCG. On reflection, he had felt it wise to maintain mention of these staff groups in the Rules since they related to the policy responsibility of the General Secretary, not simply to management. In order to avoid giving the impression that all responsibility was concentrated in the seven persons of the Staff Leadership Group, it was necessary to explain the distinction between the two levels of leadership by stating the mandates of the two groups. It was therefore decided to maintain the text as proposed.

Ms Best reported that the Sub-committee had considered possible reductions to the text of the Rules, but decided to leave the text unchanged. In light of the mandate given by the Central Committee in September 1997 (minutes, p.57), and on recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee, in accordance with the mandate given to it by the Central Committee,

*gave approval to the amended Rules as presented in Appendix III, and instructed the General Secretary to circulate them to the Central Committee for information.*

Attention would have to be drawn to the change in the Rule about the Presidium which was conditioned by a constitutional change. These changes must be acted on by the Assembly.



## D. Gender Guidelines

Ms Mary Ann Lundy presented a staff paper on Gender Guidelines for the Secretariat of the WCC which had been drawn up in response to a recommendation by the team visit to the Ecumenical Centre in November 1996, for incorporation into the Staff Rules.

The necessity for gender guidelines arose from a basic discrepancy that can be observed in modern society where men and women tend to be treated as if they were unequal. The paper began by giving a historical overview of the WCC's commitment to an inclusive community, concluding that two main areas needed to be addressed in such guidelines: (1) ethos - our vision, principles and values, based on the gospel and its message of human dignity and mutual respect, and (2) gender guidelines for building, sustaining and nurturing a community which lives out the calling of the people of God.

Suggested guidelines had been drawn up under the following headings:

- 1) community life, dealing with spirituality for community, recognising the person, the working environment, style of work;
- 2) staff issues: appointment of staff, staff orientation and training, design and appraisal of jobs, dealing with conflicts, exercise of power and decision-making, gender balance in staffing;
- 3) monitoring and assessing;
- 4) suggested questions for the process.

In discussion, some expressed appreciation for the guidelines while others felt it would be wiser not to put them in writing. Clearly the WCC was more sensitive towards the inclusive community and gender balances than many of its member churches.

The General Secretary asked for advice as to whether the Executive should receive these as internal guidelines, or whether further work should be requested prior to the September meeting.

The guidelines were referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

\*

At a later session, Dr Best presented the Sub-committee's report, saying that members had noted with appreciation the efforts made to introduce Gender Guidelines for the Secretariat in Geneva. It recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

*to receive the guidelines; to instruct the General Secretary to continue the process of implementation, and to request a progress report at its next meeting in September.*

#### 4. OUR ECUMENICAL VISION

The General Secretary introduced the revised text, noting that there had been many versions since the decision had been made to separate it from the main Common Understanding and Vision document. The Central Committee in September had recommended that it be further developed by the Assembly Worship Committee, and that ways be considered for its inclusion in worship at the 50th anniversary celebration. The AWC had revised the text which had then been worked on further, bringing it to the present stage.

The present text had received general approval from the Assembly Planning Committee (APC). It was hoped that the Executive would authorise its distribution to assembly delegates and to member churches, with the understanding that it could be used in worship services celebrating the 50th anniversary. The Assembly would also have to decide in what way it would wish to use the text.

Members of the Executive made a number of suggestions for improving the text. Some felt that if it were shorter there was more likelihood that people might learn it by heart, but there was such a variety of different understandings as to what should be included.

The text was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

\*

At a later session, a further revised version of the Vision Statement was shared with the Executive, with an indication of the proposed changes (see Appendix IV).

The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

*to receive the Vision statement and to authorise its distribution as a working document, taking into consideration comments made by members of the Executive Committee, to be forwarded to the member churches.*

#### 5. ASSEMBLY PREPARATIONS

##### A. Report of the Assembly Planning Committee

Bishop Jonas Jonson, moderator of the APC, presented the report of its recent meeting - its final session prior to the Assembly - as follows:

**Plenary Sessions:** Three deliberative plenaries were envisage: on the Decade, on Africa, and on the Theme. Three speakers had accepted invitations to speak at the Theme



plenary. Staff were requested to give more attention to the symbols and images to be used in the various plenaries in order to avoid confusion. The element of confession/recommitment should be used sparingly (apart from at the recommitment service) and within a clearly delineated framework. Professional help should be sought in producing the plenaries.

Two plenaries on CUV were scheduled for the first Sunday: the first would continue the process of reception of the CUV policy document, enabling assembly participants to respond, to consider its implications, and, where necessary, to qualify the understanding. The Vision statement would be introduced as a working document. The second session would focus on the amendments to the Constitution and Rules and the governance proposal, which would be referred to Policy Reference Committee I. More details on these sessions would be shared with the Executive in September.

The APC also considered the flow of business matters and deliberations in plenary sessions throughout the assembly. Following the Moderator's and General Secretary's reports on the second afternoon, an open forum (optional for delegates) was planned in order to provide time for discussion of these reports.

**Hearings - Phase I:** the annotated agendas for the Hearings were reviewed, as was the material for the workbook and drafts of the popular report, *From Canberra to Harare*, relating to the work of each Unit.

The APC affirmed the draft of the popular report as basic information for the work of the Hearings. The workbook materials for the Hearings should contain essential information such as the mandate, decisive events, and factual matters, while the introduction should include reference to the changes during the period since Canberra of which delegates should be aware. The Programme Guidelines Committee (PGC) report would review and assess the past against the policy guidelines.

The APC affirmed an integrated presentation in the Hearings. Though each may differ in the methodology used, it was felt that reviewing each stream individually was the least engaging of the possible styles. Secondly, time should be made available for delegates to respond, share experiences and ask questions. It should be assumed that delegates have read the popular report. Members of the PGC sub-group participating in each Hearing would be well informed and should be prepared to help initiate discussion.

The Unit Directors presented their plans for the Hearings - Phase I, which was to give opportunity for analysis of the work that had taken place in the period since Canberra. Each of the five Hearings (the four Units plus the General Secretariat-related offices) would bring together some 300 people, so discussion would not be easy to organise.



**Hearings - Phase II:** Here the intention was to seek 'areas of concern' for the future mandate/work of the WCC. The Hearings would present a unique opportunity to sharpen understanding of priorities for the ecumenical movement as a whole. The new Central Committee would have the task of delineating specific programme areas.

**Padare:** The APC looked at some 300 registrations received so far for the Padare, and suggested areas where some recruitment should take place in order to ensure the inclusion of emerging global issues that should be reflected in the ecumenical movement in the future. More work was needed on the description of the content/issues of each of the six streams into which the Padare was divided, reflecting Phase II of the Hearings. Resources available in Harare should be used, including delegates and visitors, giving them opportunity to make their contributions.

The proposal to appoint a number of "wise persons" to form a Padare Council was discussed; a recommendation to this effect would be brought to this Executive.

**Worship and Bible Study/small groups:** Materials prepared for the assembly were used during the APC meeting and some evaluation was done. The link between the worship and the Bible study/small groups was strongly affirmed. Concern was expressed about the space available for the small group sessions.

**Visitors, Youth, Communications:** The APC received and discussed staff reports on the Visitors' Programme, youth-related events, participation in the assembly and communications. It was noted that relatively few young people had been named as delegates, so the 15% category must be used to increase this number.

Consideration was given to the materials to be mailed, including the Handbook and the Workbook, as well as to the orientation process for leaders and committees. The APC felt that an additional letter to participants in September would be appropriate.

**50th Anniversary Celebration:** The APC discussed how to use the presence of church leaders in appropriate ways during the public celebration and the service of re-commitment. It would also be important to find space for the young men and women whose emerging leadership had been of particular significance.

**Evaluation:** In discussing their experience as a committee, most members saw their involvement as positive. Nevertheless, some areas of unclarity concerning the APC's mandate should be addressed before any future assembly. It was felt that the APC's work had begun too early, while - with the change of dates - it was ending too soon.

Some continuity between the APC and the assembly itself would be maintained through

the presence of its moderator on the Business Committee; other members expressed their willingness to be available for consultation or help as needed in the period up to the assembly

**In Harare**, the churches were preparing themselves and many of those outside ecumenical structures were also committed to the assembly. Regional involvement needed improvement. The political situation remained unpredictable, but was currently calm.

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In discussion, Metropolitan Kirill asked about the situation of churches which had not yet applied for space at the Padare: would they be excluded from participation because they had not met the deadline for applications? Bishop Jonson assured him that new applications could still be received on arrival in Harare.

Ms Blyth explained that applicants were encouraged to be as creative as possible and to use a variety of ways of presentation. Each of the six streams had been allocated space for 4 - 8 workshops at any time; each stream had a staff coordinator who would enter into dialogue with each applicant and help to prepare them. Out of the 300 applications received, seven were from homosexual groups: these had been allocated to the stream on human rights.

Fr Hilarion referred to the September 1997 consultation on sexual orientation, and expressed concern that some applications for space at the Padare had been received from homosexual groups. He feared this might cause a problem for some churches which did not want this issue to be addressed. He reminded the Executive of the criticism from Orthodox churches following the Vancouver and Canberra assemblies with regard to the practice of Aboriginal rites. The presence of homosexuals would surely attract the attention of the mass media and create problems for Orthodox participants as well as churches of the south, and for the ZCC. How could this discussion be avoided, or at least localised in such a way as not to harm the assembly?

Dr Tolen explained that *Padare* meant a market-place where people come to discuss issues and seek solutions, so the churches would come and share the challenges they were facing in their efforts to witness to Jesus Christ. In Africa, as elsewhere, the issue of human sexuality was a divisive one; many member churches were confronted by divisions. It was therefore necessary for the Council to deal with such things: how can we stay together even when we face difficult problems? We cannot leave people suffering without trying to say something as churches. We must accept to be challenged, even if we do not agree. Let us share our critical points of view, but let us stay together.



Metr. Kirill referred to earlier discussions about the issue of homosexuality and his impression that it would be raised at the assembly in one way or another, urging that it was important to channel it for discussion in an appropriate place. He had understood this would take place outside the official assembly (cf. the Agora at Vancouver) where challenges from the churches could be discussed. But now it seemed that the Padare was an integral part of the agenda of the assembly. He agreed with Dr Tolen that this issue could be dealt with alongside other problems, but he doubted whether the assembly would equate homosexuality with sin. He feared such a discussion would create obstacles for many delegates. We must have a clear picture of what our delegates can expect at Harare and not jeopardise our churches because of unexpected developments.

Dr Raiser referred to the aide-mémoire on the September consultation, and to discussions during his visit to Moscow concerning the Padare and its relation to the assembly agenda. There was no obligation for anyone to participate in the Padare: but it was open to delegates and visitors alike if they so wished. In that sense it was not part of the official agenda of the assembly. Rather, it was an attempt to bring into the scope of the assembly a wide spread of activities, insights, and reflections that were taking place in the member churches, and to become more sensitive to the preoccupations of the churches.

Secondly, the Business Committee was responsible for the agenda of the assembly itself and no item could be introduced without their approval. It was clear for us as Executive Committee members that the issue of sexual orientation was not part of that agenda. The assembly could only deal with matters that had been part of the life of the World Council, and while there had been attempts to deal with the wider area of human sexuality, the results had been inconclusive and were not ready to be included in the agenda. Both at Antelias and at the September consultation, it was recognised that any attempt to deny the existence of the issue in our member churches and to keep it away from the assembly would be counter-productive and provoke the kind of reaction we want to avoid.

Dr Raiser reiterated that the Padare was a space for sharing, exchange, listening and receiving experiences and wisdom from one another; it was not a forum to mobilise people in favour of influencing the assembly on any issue.

For this reason, the APC had followed the advice of the September consultation and was proposing the formation of a Padare Council of delegates who would have responsibility for ensuring that the spirit of Padare was maintained and the kind of embarrassment that the ROC and others were afraid of would be avoided. He affirmed that every effort had been made to take these concerns very seriously and he believed that the process envisaged would be sufficient to allay Metropolitan Kirill's fears.

Metr. Kirill was grateful for the explanation, but pointed out that people who only saw

reports in the media would not hear this but would simply see reference to the Padare on the assembly programme, and it would be difficult to convince them that such issues were only being discussed outside the main agenda. He warned that the image of the assembly would be formed not by the leadership and the delegates but by the mass media.

Bishop Jonson stressed that the only way to balance the situation would be to ensure that all other parts of the Padare were of such importance that they would attract the media's attention.

The APC report was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

## **B. Assembly Committees**

A document outlining the work of the assembly committees was presented, with preliminary proposals for membership. Although the deadline for naming delegates had long since passed, a number of churches had not yet sent this information to the Assembly Office, so the selection of persons to serve on committees had been rather limited. More complete lists would be shared with the Officers in June or with the Executive in September. Moderators and rapporteurs of the committees would be nominated prior to the assembly so that the persons concerned could be informed in advance; the assembly would have to ratify the membership of each committee early in its business. Dr Raiser invited members to suggest possible names of delegates who they felt could serve in leadership positions.

A paper indicating names so far proposed by member churches for inclusion in the **15% category of delegates** was also shared with the Executive, and together with Committee membership proposals, and a suggested list of advisers, was referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

## **C. Action by the Executive Committee**

At a later session the Sub-committee reports were presented as follows:

a) The Programme Sub-committee received the report of the Assembly Planning Committee with gratitude and appreciation, and made the following requests:

- *that a clarification of the relationship between Padare and the Assembly be included in the Workbook;*
- *that a clear outline for the 50th anniversary and recommitment celebrations on the second Sunday afternoon be presented to the Executive in September;*
- *that staff investigate the possibility of a special event in relation to the 50th*



*anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights (10 December), and the suggestion that Ms Mary Robinson, head of the UN Human Rights Commission, be invited;*

*- that staff be encouraged to seek items of particular interest on the assembly agenda and consider an invitation to Dr Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, as a speaker.*

The Sub-committee **endorsed** the proposal by the APC

*that a Padare Advisory Group be formed, comprising delegates and non-delegates.*

The Executive Committee **agreed** to the above requests and recommendation.

#### **b) 15% category of delegates**

Noting that the responses from the churches regarding the 15% category of delegates had been minimal so far, the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**:

*- that all youth proposed by the churches be nominated in the 15% category of delegates, so long as the regional percentages of delegates (as indicated by Central Committee at its meeting in 1995) are maintained;*

*- that priority be given to young adults and women delegates as the second candidate from a church requesting subsidies, and that subsidy requests be entertained from churches which otherwise could not propose a youth or a woman as a delegate;*

*- that also persons filling other criteria be nominated; special attention could be given to Orthodox women.*

#### **c) Assembly Committee Membership**

Since the list of delegates was still incomplete, the selection of members of committees could not be finalised. The Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee carefully reviewed the lists that had been circulated, identified some gaps, ensured that balances were adequate, and directed staff to check the names selected once again. It recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**:

*that a revised list of proposed Assembly Committee Membership be sent to members of the Executive Committee for comment and further proposals, and that it be finalised if possible by the Officers at their meeting in June 1998.*

The General Secretary reiterated the request to members of the Executive for assistance

in bringing to the attention of staff any mistakes in names of delegates, or in the committee lists, as soon as possible. Any proposals for membership of committees, or for leadership roles, would also be welcomed. (These should be sent to Ms Stromberg in the Assembly Office).

## 6. APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Mr Huibert van Beek presented two applications for membership from churches, one for associate council status, and five from international ecumenical organisations that wished to be in working relationship with the WCC. These were referred to the Staffing and Nominations Sub-committee.

At a later session, Dr Best reported on behalf of the Sub-committee.

### A. Member Churches

Applications had been received from the Christian Protestant Angkola Church, Indonesia, currently an associate member, and from the Christian Church of Sumba, Indonesia. The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

*to recommend to the Eighth Assembly that the Christian Protestanat Angkola Church and the Christian Church of Sumba be received into full membership of the World Council of Churches.*

### B. National Councils of Churches

The Samoa Council of Churches (Western Samoa) had applied for the status of associate council. The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

*to recommend to the Eighth Assembly that the Samoa Council of Churches be received as an associate council of the World Council of Churches.*

### C. International Ecumenical Organisations

Applications for recognition as organisations in working relationship with the WCC had been received from five bodies. The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

*to recommend to the Eighth Assembly that the following organisations be recognised as International Ecumenical Organisations in working relationship with the World Council of Churches:*



- *Frontier Internship in Mission*
- *Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism*
- *World Young Women's Christian Association*
- *United Bible Societies*
- *Associations of Christian Colleges and Universities: International Ecumenical Forum.*

## 7. PUBLIC ISSUES

Rev. Dwain Epps presented a Note on Public Issues, including a summary of statements and messages issued in the period since the last meeting of the Central Committee, September 1997. This dealt with follow-up on CC decisions and matters of continuing concern - Nigeria, Sudan, Sierra Leone and Iraq (see below), as well as other initiatives which included staff visits to Haiti, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Jerusalem, Irian Jaya, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Great Lakes Region. Detailed reports on these visits were available from the CCIA office.

Background information was provided on the situation in **Bougainville**, noting in particular the role played by WCC President, Bishop Leslie Boseto. His accompaniment of the Bougainvilleans over the years, his initiatives to bring people together for talks and his approaches to governments had received little attention in the press reports on the Lincoln agreement. However those close to the conflict recognised that his quiet diplomacy was key to this achievement.

The permanent cease-fire accomplished the first of the agreed points in the Burnham Declaration, to come into force on 30 April. This was an encouraging first step but crucial decisions lay ahead. The people of Bougainville would require the churches' continuing prayers, solidarity and assistance as they moved to the next stages in pursuit of lasting peace with justice.

The mobilisation of military forces in **Zimbabwe** in early January to quell public disturbances was an alarming development and caused considerable unrest in the WCC constituency in view of the forthcoming assembly in Harare. However, Zimbabwe had returned to relative calm, though the fundamental issues behind the demonstrations had not yet been resolved, leaving room for continuing social instability. Rev. Sam Kobia was following the situation carefully.

## **Proposals for Action:**

### **A. Algeria**

The tragedy of Algeria continued, marked by an almost unbroken spiral of violence since the Algerian war for independence. Up to now the WCC had avoided addressing this situation through public statements. It had a long-standing tie with Algeria through the massive ecumenical efforts undertaken during the Algerian war to assist refugees and displaced persons, and to rebuild agricultural infrastructure. There was a vital but tiny, largely expatriate, Protestant community there which had continued, alongside its Roman Catholic counterparts, to provide essential social services and Christian ministries. Yet the possibility for the WCC to influence the situation was nearly non-existent.

The situation was complex, and the Council had few sources of information and analysis of developments especially since the 1992 elections which denied Islamic parties the share of power indicated by the vote.

However, members of the Executive had stated their view that the Council not remain silent in face of the wave of murders of entire villages in recent times. In September 1997 the Christian communities of Algeria issued a statement lamenting the human tragedy taking place but at the same time celebrating the will of the Algerian people to live in peace with hope for the future. In January 1998, CIMADE issued a communiqué, while leaders of French religious communities expressed their solidarity with the victims of violence, with the plight of Algerians in France, and with those in Algeria who were struggling to restore mutual respect and human dignity. The European Union had recently undertaken negotiations with the Algerian Government and sent delegations to ascertain facts surrounding the violence.

It was therefore proposed that the Executive Committee issue a Message, which was **adopted** as follows:

"The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Geneva, 17-20 February 1998, deeply saddened by the violence in Algeria which has claimed a terrible toll of human lives, assures the people of this beloved land of its sincere sympathy and compassion in this time of pain and trial.

The ecumenical movement stood alongside you during your struggle for independence, seeking to minister to the victims of violence and those displaced by the war. It remained with you as you laboured to recover from the effects of war and violence, to rebuild your land, and to lay the foundations for peace and prosperity for all the people. It rejoiced in the enlightened leadership you



provided the international community in the global struggle for development, self-determination for colonized peoples, for economic justice and for peace.

Now, once again, we mourn with you those who have fallen victim to violence and horrifying acts of inhumanity. At the same time we give thanks to God for those among you who embody hope in the midst of tragedy, who resist terror and labor for peace against all odds. We are moved by those whose faith has led them to perform courageous acts of mercy.

We are aware that the troubles of this moment have deep historical roots, and complex causes. Religious sentiments, at times exaggerated, are only one factor. Economic, political, and cultural elements also combine to divide people, leading to a breakdown in dialogue and democratic processes, to social isolation and extremism. Confrontational approaches, either at home or abroad, are more likely to exacerbate tensions than to encourage forces of moderation and restoration of dialogue.

This is not a time to isolate Algeria or its people. The international community needs the discernment that only Algerians themselves can offer. During these painful years, Algerians who reject violence have engaged in dialogue and joined to strengthen democracy and respect for human rights. We hope that the nations will open their arms to you, accompany you, and seek to provide free spaces for such dialogue both in Algeria and abroad.

We have often felt powerless to help you, but we have never ceased praying that God will lead you out of this valley of death and despair. We remain with you, and offer ourselves to you in the cause of overcoming violence and sustaining the hope for a better future given by God.

May the God of mercy and of peace sustain you in these days".

## **B. Iraq**

Mr Epps referred to the report and recommendations of the ecumenical delegation which had visited Iraq from 16-28 January 1998, following up the decision of Central Committee in September 1997. This would be widely circulated.

In light of the findings of the delegation, and the renewed threat about the use of armed force against Iraq, it was proposed that the Executive Committee issue a statement. Mr Epps underlined that it had not been felt appropriate for the WCC to enter the present debate in detail; the Council's interest was to see that three things occurred:

- a negotiated resolution of the conflict within the framework of the UN Charter and with the agreement of the whole Security Council;
- removal of the threat to human life posed by the possibility of a renewed invasion;
- removal of the threat to human survival and the imposition of inhuman conditions by the continued application of sanctions.

At a session on Thursday 19 February, shortly before the UN Secretary-General was due to leave for Iraq, the Executive Committee **adopted** the following statement, which was forwarded to immediately to Dr Annan in New York:

1. Seven years ago Iraq's invasion of Kuwait resulted in the massive armed retaliation of the coalition forces led by the United States. The air strikes carried out during the Gulf War not only destroyed a major part of Iraq's military capacity, but also severely damaged its social and economic infrastructure. To force compliance with UN Security Council resolutions demanding the elimination of its biological, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction, Iraq was subjected to severe economic sanctions. The sanctions, however, unclearly outlined in time and scope, nevertheless explicitly exempted humanitarian "materials and supplies for essential civilian needs."
2. The Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Canberra (February 1991), as the Gulf War broke out, expressed concern at the way this first major world crisis in the post-cold war period was handled by the international community. It called for the strengthening of the United Nations as a guarantor of international peace and order and cautioned: "No one government or group of governments should either take or be allowed to take primary responsibility for the resolution of major conflicts beyond their own borders."
3. In response to the Gulf crisis, the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) established the Ecumenical Relief Service Programme (ERS) to provide relief and assistance to the victims of the war scattered throughout the region. This programme continues, now concentrating on Iraq, seeking to offset some of the effects of the sanctions. In coordination with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS), government ministries - particularly those responsible for health and social welfare - and with UN agencies like UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF, ERS ministers to the needs of all Iraqi people irrespective of race, religion or ethnicity.
4. The seven-year long application of economic sanctions has resulted in a further severe deterioration of the social and economic conditions of the civilian population of Iraq. Well over a million persons, 60% of them children under



five years of age, have died. Recent reports issued by private humanitarian, relief organisations, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF, have drawn attention to the plight of the Iraqi people. UN Security Council resolution 986, referred to as the "Oil for Food" agreement, was adopted in September 1995, but implemented only last year. Yet only half of the proceeds from the sale of oil (US\$ 1 billion every 90 days) is designated to meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. The balance is reserved for war reparations for UN administered relief work in the northern provinces, and to defray costs of UN monitors in Iraq. The fundamental needs of the civilian population of Iraq are not adequately met through this arrangement.

5. The WCC Central Committee, when it met in Geneva in September 1997, expressed concern about the situation in Iraq. Recalling that sanctions are by definition coercive and that they often inflict additional suffering on affected populations, particularly children, the Central Committee asked international affairs staff to undertake a visit to Iraq to study the impact of sanctions in light of the sanctions criteria contained in the "Memorandum and Recommendations on the Applications of Sanctions" adopted by the Central Committee in 1995. The WCC delegation visit to Iraq took place from 16-28 January 1998. Its report has been submitted to the Executive Committee.
6. Since the September 1997 action by the Central Committee, the confrontation between the UN Security Council and the Government of Iraq over the issue of granting unrestricted access by UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) to sites where it suspects chemical and biological weapons are stored has once again taken a serious turn. The US and UK have again moved additional forces into the Gulf region and are threatening Iraq with renewed military action to force compliance with Security Council resolutions.
7. The present explosive situation in the Gulf region poses a renewed serious threat to peace, and undermines the authority given to the United Nations Security Council by the Charter.
8. In its statement of February 1980, issued at Liebfrauenberg, France, the WCC Executive Committee said: "The churches must speak out against the tendency to resume the perilous tactics of brinkmanship. Claims by nations to become the strongest at any cost should be deplored. The churches should make clear in no uncertain terms that perspectives of foreign policy can no longer be seen in terms of 'liquidating the enemy' (be it politically, militarily or through economic and cultural pressure)." The Canberra Assembly said: "For the Security Council or the Secretary-General, in the exercise of his good offices,

to be for some reason unable to act independently and in the true spirit of the UN Charter would be unacceptable. The community of nations cannot afford such a weakening of the UN system. For the sake of world peace, for the sake of the rule of law, for the sake of the authority of the United Nations, its position as guarantor of a comprehensive international people order must be strengthened.”

The Executive Committee meeting in Geneva, 17-20 February 1998, therefore,

9. *Receives with appreciation* the report of the WCC delegation to Iraq;
10. "With respect to the present *threats of military action*, the Executive Committee:
  - 10.1 *expresses* its grave concern at the present massive military build-up in the Gulf region by the armed forces of the United States of America, supported by the UK and some other nations which participated in "Operation Desert Storm" in 1991;
  - 10.2 *warns, yet again*, that renewed military action will result in large-scale casualties and increased suffering by the Iraqi people;
  - 10.3 *calls on* the churches to press their governments to oppose military action to force Iraq's further compliance with the UN Security Council demands;
  - 10.4 *further calls* on the churches to respond to the appeals of the churches in Iraq to join them in prayers for a non-violent resolution of the present crisis and to work for justice and lasting peace in the region;
  - 10.5 *welcomes and supports* the present diplomatic efforts to resolve the stand-off between Iraq and the United States over the issue of unrestricted access for UNSCOM inspection teams.
  - 10.6 *urges* that this matter be brought again to the Security Council, and that no further military steps be taken without its concurrence.
- 11 With respect to *the application of sanctions* against Iraq, the Executive Committee:
  - 11.1 *recalls and reaffirms* the WCC's criteria for determining the applicability and effectiveness of sanctions;



- 11.2 *considers* that the application of sanctions in Iraq fails to meet these criteria which state, *inter alia*, that “The good achieved by sanctions must not be exceeded by the harm that can reasonably be anticipated;”
- 11.3 *further considers* that these sanctions have resulted in serious violations of the human rights of Iraqi population by denying them the rights to adequate food, clothing, housing, medical care, education, social services and employment;
- 11.4 *deplores* the lack of openness and transparency in the decision-making procedures of the Sanctions Committee, particularly with respect to its role in approving contracts for the import of humanitarian goods into Iraq;
- 11.5 *convinced* that the present sanctions regime has a punitive character and reveals a tendency for political considerations to take precedence over objective evaluation of facts,
- 11.6 *appeals* to the UN Security Council to undertake a thorough review of the sanctions regime on Iraq, taking into account their impact on the civilian population, and with a view to defining clear and agreed goals with a specific time frame and benchmarks for the full lifting of sanctions;
- 11.7 *calls upon* the churches to continue their efforts to provide generous relief and humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq.

**C. Background Note on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI):  
A Threat to Social Rights, the Environment and Democracy?**

Mr Epps referred to a further concern - the Multilateral Agreement on Investment - and shared a background note on the matter with the Executive. As so little information was known about this agreement, he suggested that reference to MAI could be made in the General Secretary's letter to member churches following this Executive. A summary of the background note follows:

The MAI was a new agreement with legal force being negotiated at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the group of 29 rich countries based in Paris. It was originally intended to be part of the Uruguay Round of the GATT, forerunner of the World Trade Organisation. The MAI was strongly opposed by countries of the South.

The issue was taken up by the USA which, with the support of multinational companies, pushed for an agreement to be negotiated within the OECD. Negotiations began in secret

in 1995, aiming for an agreement in 1997, though this had been delayed until April 1998. Once the agreement was signed, non-member countries would be invited to sign it on a “take it or leave it” basis, but they have no say in the negotiations. There has been very little public information or debate.

The agreement was based on three key principles designed to strengthen the rights of multinational companies:

- non-discrimination: foreign investors must be treated as well as or better than domestic companies;
- no entry restrictions: national and local government cannot restrict foreign investment in any form or in any sector (except defence);
- no conditions: national and local government cannot impose “performance requirements” such as to ensure local employment, control currency speculation, or to require a minimum period for investment.

Once the MAI was signed, a country could not leave the agreement for five years. and successor governments would be bound for 15 years. If national or local governments breached any of the principles, they could be taken to an international tribunal and sued for past and potential future damages.

The implications of the MAI are the following:

1. it takes away democratic powers from national and local government and gives new rights to multinational companies;
2. it could effectively dismantle existing environmental and social laws;
3. it is unfair and could be damaging for the poorest countries;
4. it would remove powers from local government and undermine local initiatives;
5. it is being negotiated with no public participation or debate and with the exclusion of the majority of countries.

In discussion, members of the Executive Committee expressed concern about the Agreement and the fact that so little information about it had reached the public.

Mr Kobia explained that more detailed materials were available as the process had been going for several years. A staff group from Units III and IV had been formed to work on globalisation issues, exclusion and debt, and were following this process closely. Further work was to be done with groups in OECD countries.

The matter was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.



At a later session, Dr Kässmann reported on behalf of the Sub-committee, which encouraged the General Secretary:

- *to draw the MAI to the attention of the churches in his letter to member churches following this Executive Committee;*
- *to ask the Office of Communication, in consultation with Unit III staff, to consider appropriate forms for calling the issue to the attention of church-related media;*
- *to request that a letter be written to member churches in the 29 countries which are party to the MAI;*
- *to ask members of the Executive Committee to inform church leaders in their countries about the MAI.*

The Executive Committee **endorsed** this proposal.

## 7. CELEBRATION OF THE YEAR 2000

Following two meetings organised by WCC in 1996 and 1997 with member churches, Christian World Communions and ecumenical partners, church and ecumenical groups drew attention to the need for a popular brochure outlining the celebrations proposed to mark the year 2000. Mr Yorgo Lemopoulos introduced the draft text of this brochure which staff wished to share with members of the Executive prior to its publication, although he pointed out that this was not to be seen as an official statement under the authority of the Executive Committee.

The emphasis was on activities at local level, thus there was little reference to the WCC. The feeling was that the most important aspect was how each celebration at local, regional or global level would convey the fellowship and communion that the churches can live with each other. The Council was expressing willingness to facilitate and encourage the wide variety of plans being made by the churches. The brochure would be shared with the Council's constituency, including assembly delegates, as well as with the wider public.

Appreciation was expressed for this initiative, but no action was required.

## 8. RELATIONSHIPS WITH ORTHODOX CHURCHES

### A. Some Reflections on Orthodox-WCC Relations

Fr Thomas FitzGerald presented a paper prepared by the Orthodox Task Force (OTF) setting out observations on the present situation vis à vis the Orthodox and the WCC. This was prepared in part as a follow up to the request by Central Committee in September 1997, and in part as a working paper for the General Secretary prior to his visit to Moscow in December 1997.

The paper dealt with the following main points:

1) Recent statements about Orthodox concerns which raised questions such as: Why do the Orthodox feel their concerns have not been heard? If Orthodox concerns were recognised by the leadership of the WCC, why did these concerns not have a visible impact on the Council's activities as a whole? What was the significance of the fact that many of the views expressed by the Orthodox were in fact also held by many other partners within the fellowship?

2) New challenges, including new developments in the ecumenical community, in the Protestant churches, in the Roman Catholic Church, as well as in the Orthodox Churches - the situation was very different from what it was in the past;

3) Fundamental Orthodox questions, especially in relation to CUV, such as: different understandings of the unity we seek; the fact that the number of Protestant member churches continues to grow; local ecumenism ; the nature and character of WCC documents and decisions/the use of the word 'ecumenical'/ambiguity of terminology; the ecclesiological problem/the wide variety of churches with different ecclesiologies and self-understandings and their impact on the way the Council works and is organised; WCC agenda and priorities/who sets the agenda?/Orthodox culture and Orthodox ethos: different style, different protocol; Worship, and the question of intercommunion or "eucharistic hospitality".

4) Developing a new ethos in the Council: valuable insights were offered in Konrad Raiser's book *To be the Church* and in the report of the Moderator to Central Committee in September 1997. To what extent could the search for a "new ethos" be related to the concern for a "new model" of organisation such as the "family model" suggested by the Orthodox and by others?

5) Concrete steps towards a genuine dialogue, affirming the need to keep the discussion going, through meetings (such as the one at Antelias) with emphasis on sharing and



reflection. There should be greater visibility of the WCC in the life of the Orthodox Churches, and the Orthodox should make use of the materials and human resources available.

Members of the Executive were invited to respond to the challenge presented by this paper.

### Discussion

As a member of a United Church, Dr Best spoke of the rich experience she had gained through contacts with Orthodox, particularly in the area of worship and liturgy, but she admitted to finding it difficult to be in a real dialogue with them. For example, at the World Mission Conference in Salvador when efforts were being made to formulate issues prior to bringing them to plenary, the Orthodox were absent. When the report was presented in plenary, the Orthodox were unhappy - but it was only then that there was a chance to negotiate. Was the problem caused by the fact that she was a lay woman from a uniting church?

Dr Tolen noted similar experiences in the area of understanding of ecclesiology. There was an impression that communication was taking place, but this was not really the case - Protestants and Orthodox tended to understand things differently even if they use the same words. He asked for suggestions as to how discussions with the Orthodox could be more constructive, to help us move forward.

What had membership in the WCC meant for the Orthodox Churches over the past 37 years? asked Dr Kässmann, and what had encounters with other churches within the ecumenical movement meant for them? Surely some changes had taken place through the very fact of getting know people from other backgrounds?

Fr Bria noted that there had indeed been some evolution in the Orthodox understanding of their identity and of the identity of Protestants. The aim should be to achieve greater mutual understanding, not simply mutual recognition. Secondly, 70 years of communist regimes had resulted in many frustrations that were only now being dealt with. New language had to be found as the old language was no longer apt, but many did not yet realise the need to change. Orthodoxy was in transition but there was as yet no instrument for the process. He did not accept questioning about the validity of Orthodox membership in the ecumenical movement. The Orthodox know the reason for their presence; that was not being challenged. The problem was one of participation.

Dr Aagaard felt the paper did not do justice to where we are in reality. There were many examples of lived unity that already exist - we must reflect on the lived faith reality. She hoped that any future paper would reflect the new insights gained by the Council in our

common endeavours, ecclesiology and methodology. The Ecclesiology and Ethics study had begun to show that identities and traditions were not fixed but were evolving.

It was not only the Orthodox who experienced tensions because of their membership in the Council, said Mr Briggs. He represented a tradition whose voice was not always heard and it was easy to feel isolated within the fellowship - but also to feel isolated within one's own church because of one's involvement in the ecumenical movement. He was grateful for what he had learned from the Orthodox; Evangelicals and Orthodox find some common cause in the Council which brings them together.

Dr Tsetsis pointed out that the Orthodox believed it was their duty, their mission, to work towards the unity of the Body of Christ which was torn in the course of history. He felt the paper depicted today's reality, but pointed out that the difficulties between the Orthodox and the Council had existed from the beginning, even in 1927 at Lausanne, where the same issues were being raised.

The Toronto Statement had paved the way for meaningful participation, but periodically the same issues had been raised, without result. Why? Because the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox have two different speeds, different ecclesiologies, different concepts of unity and how to reach Christian unity. The non-Orthodox constituency believe that unity should be achieved here and now, while the Orthodox believe it is not possible to proceed with this kind of unity without taking into account the experience of the early church, before the divisions came about. This was one of the major difficulties; the other socio-political problems were of secondary nature and could be resolved.

The right formula had to be found to allow for co-existence in the WCC. The issue was not whether the Orthodox stay or leave the Council: there was a firm commitment to stay. But if the Council is a family, all parts of this family should have some say in the conduct of its affairs.

Responding to Dr Kässmann, Dr Tsetsis affirmed that both families had been mutually enriched during the past 50 years of their fellowship in the Council. Not only have the Orthodox been influenced by their membership in the Council, but they probably did not recognise the extent of their influence on the Council or on the Protestant world, especially for example in the area of liturgical renewal which was taking place in the Protestant churches.

Metropolitan Kirill acknowledged that both Orthodox and Protestants had given and received much from each other through the WCC, but the present discussion related to a particular crisis which had many foundations. One was the cultural problem - responding to Dr Best he pointed out that the Orthodox had not wanted to attend the



section meetings, they were only interested in the plenary when they were challenged in their theological identity. Many issues considered in the context of WCC were alien to the Orthodox because they were not affected by them. So why had he himself remained involved in the WCC for 30 years when much of its agenda remains strange to him? The Orthodox must not only feel a utilitarian benefit from their participation in the WCC - they must also feel the need to be there, and regrettably that was not the case today.

He was grateful for the paper by the Orthodox Task Force and the aide-memoire on the General Secretary's visit to Moscow, which covered most of his concerns. But something was missing: maybe there should have been more reference to the discussions in Chambésy and Antelias where he felt the real problems existing on the frontier between the Orthodox and Protestant worlds had been touched upon more closely.

He then looked at the problem from another angle: how conflicts may arise and lead to tensions. In Russia today the churches were involved in public debate with parliament, working together on the concept of civil society. One of the problems the ROC was facing was that the church should not accept liberal standards as they existed in international bodies. He believed that the question, what it means to be a Christian today, was one of the most important - if not the most important - question today because of the tension between the tradition of liberalism in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and the building up of contemporary liberalism. A major problem today was that the liberal thinking had had a counter-influence upon the Protestant theology of the 19th and 20th centuries, so that this theology had been inspired not only by the Scriptures and Christian tradition but by liberal secular ideas. Today it was perceived that the ideas of liberalism could challenge Christian traditions and win so the Orthodox were resisting it - they did not see liberalism as being on the same level as the apostolic tradition. It was this tension that was giving rise to difficulties.

Liberal theology was present in the WCC along with other theologies and that was quite acceptable - but should that liberal theology dominate? Metr.Kirill felt that the WCC was becoming more and more a mechanism in which liberal secular standards were translated into categories of theological thinking, and this thinking was included in its practice, thus bearing influence on the churches. He had no constructive suggestion to offer which might lead to solving this conflict in the dialogue between churches and secular institutions - a problem which he feared would be present for some time to come. So what should the World Council do? Should it adopt a liberal view in order to be accepted by the churches? Should it unite churches so that they can pass the political and moral ideal of Christianity to modern civil society?

Concluding, Metr.Kirill said the problem was not only a question of culture, of language, even of ecclesiology or of unity: it was much more complex, relating to the problem of

the meaning of tradition, the norms of the faith. The WCC should meet this challenge after 50 years.

The Moderator agreed that there was a problem, both in the Council and in our churches. It was in the WCC because it had not been possible to integrate the Council and the churches - both remain where they are. The difficulty was an expression of this lack of integration. For many political and cultural reasons, the Orthodox churches were not able to place the ecumenical challenge in the very heart of their life and witness - they were represented by a group of ecumenists. They came to WCC meetings but were not able to interpret them into the life of their churches. Yet things were changing, our churches were becoming people's churches, but as people became more exposed to ecumenical realities they discovered that ecumenism could have a disintegrating effect on the identity and life of the churches.

He had come into the WCC many years ago and his church had long been part of the Council, but it had not been able to integrate itself into the life and witness of the WCC: this had to be accepted in humility. It was not the real partnership it ought to be but rather a peaceful co-existence which was being transformed into a process of maturation, dialogue, listening, learning, experiencing contradictions. Two major traditions remained side by side in a process of inter-connection - but it had to be accepted that the Orthodox remained to a large extent on the periphery of the ecumenical movement in general and of the World Council in particular. This question had to be wrestled with, and the task was twofold:

The current task of the Orthodox churches was to engage their people in a process of learning and formation because they were not sufficiently aware of the ecumenical movement and the issues it was dealing with, which meant the image was distorted. So in spite of 50 years of togetherness, and in spite of tremendous advances in many areas, we realised we are faced with enormous problems and challenges amidst uncertainties and confusion and polarisation - and this had to be taken seriously. He agreed with Fr Tsetsis that the Orthodox remain committed to the Council and the ecumenical movement, to their goals and vision. The problem lay in the nature of our togetherness. The Council's next task should be to call a second consultation on the lines of the Antelias meeting where Orthodox and Protestant partners can engage in a real dialogue. The time for monologues was past.

Dr Raiser saw his role as general secretary in terms of helping the Council to move beyond the point where there was agreement on the fact that there a problem existed and that something must be done about it. But there was difficulty agreeing what the problem was, so before there was any hope of moving forward the agenda had to be clarified. The third section of the paper tried to do this but more work was needed in order to identify



the different character of the problems to be dealt with. Many questions were continuously being worked on by Faith and Order, for example. The question had been asked during this meeting: why has there not been any progress in 50 years?

But who is the WCC and how can there be progress unless the member churches are included? And if the WCC has no authority over the churches, it is dependent on the persuasiveness of recommendations, reports, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to turn people's hearts. On the other hand, perhaps the Council's methodologies are inadequate and should be revised.

One part of the problem which had not really been faced was the fact that theological issues were part of the agenda of Faith and Order, while procedural and structural issues, decision-making, and so on, were the responsibility of the governing bodies. So any future consultation on a similar basis to that in Antelias should not have a wide-open agenda but be limited to two or three mutually agreed issues, in the expectation that this would help us come to the assembly with a clear understanding of the agenda to be addressed; the assembly should then give a clear mandate and instruction to the new Central Committee to take up that agenda in an appropriate way.

Thus the task for the coming months was to clarify the different levels of the agenda and establish an order of priorities. The resources to address the agenda would then have to be mobilised.

The paper was referred to the Programme Sub-committee for further study.

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At a later session, Dr Kässmann presented the Sub-committee's recommendation, which the Executive Committee **agreed** as follows:

*to request the General Secretary to find ways of continuing the discussion on Orthodox participation in the World Council of Churches, and on specific Orthodox concerns, in a constructive way, both in the light of the deliberations of the Executive Committee, but also in view of the Pre-Assembly Orthodox meeting and the results of an eventual Pan-Orthodox consultation on ecumenism, with the aim of clarifying the agenda and focusing on a limited number of specific issues.*

Dr Raiser noted that the discussion so far had shown that this was not simply an Orthodox issue limited to the Orthodox Task Force; rather, it addressed the WCC as a whole and all staff concerned must be involved if progress were to be made.

## **B. General Secretary's visit to the Russian Orthodox Church**

In his report, the General Secretary had referred to his visit to Moscow at the invitation of H.H. Alexis II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate (DECR). He had been accompanied by H.E. Archbishop Jeremiasz of Wroclaw and Szczecin (Polish Orthodox Church), Rt Rev. Hendrik Svenungson, Bishop of Stockholm (Lutheran Church of Sweden and a former member of the Presidium of the CEC), Prof. Nicholas Lossky (Russian Orthodox Church), Mr Georges Lemopoulos (WCC/OCER), and Mr Alexander Belopopsky (WCC/Unit IV).

The aim of the visit had been to interpret the work of the WCC to a number of diverse audiences, and to discuss with the leadership of the ROC problems and perspectives in relation to its participation in the ecumenical movement and the WCC. It also demonstrated visible support for the ROC's involvement in the ecumenical movement at a time of severe criticism of such involvement from various sectors within the church itself.

The delegation had been impressed by the work of rebuilding and consolidating the church and the progress being made in many areas of church life. Against the background of profound socio-political and generational change, there was a passionate debate both in the ROC and in Russian society about the attitude to ecumenism and the WCC. Although the ROC leadership affirms its commitment to the ecumenical movement, at another level there was a lack of information and consequently a growing hostility to the WCC. The visit had given the delegation opportunity to learn about the Russian context and to assist those facing criticism in attempting to respond to critical questions.

Further, the delegation witnessed personally the difficulties faced by the ROC today, manifesting their solidarity with those who have become the target of criticism because of their ecumenical commitment, and to begin thinking about possible solutions to a problem which transcends the Russian Orthodox reality. Both sides affirmed the spirit of cooperation in their relationship. Three immediate tasks emerged for the WCC:

- together with the Russian Orthodox Church, to embark on an effort of facing jointly the present anti-ecumenical campaign, which drew its arguments mainly from the lack of responsible information, from considered misinformation or even from deliberately distorted information;
- to re-think the Round Table programme in Russia, given the fact that the disinterested and fruitful cooperation of the Round Table was seen as one of the main reasons for continued Russian Orthodox involvement in the WCC;
- to explore with the ROC ways of conveying a positive image of the WCC and the ecumenical movement, highlighting those programmes and activities which could be



particularly meaningful in a rapidly evolving context where people were facing great challenges.

Other matters discussed during the visit included ROC participation in the WCC's forthcoming Eighth Assembly, in view of the fears that journalists may report some events in a way that might place members of the Russian Orthodox delegation in a difficult position. Secondly, substantial discussion took place on membership in the WCC: the theological and ecclesiological challenges which would have to be dealt with seriously. Both sides agreed that a change of mentality was necessary. Thirdly, the ROC would welcome a process of radical change in the WCC, in relation to forms of representation and decision-making.

Clearly, the CUV, as a contemporary interpretation of the Toronto Statement, and the Basis of the WCC had already opened the way towards a courageous step forward beyond bilateralism and multilateralism. It was suggested that the WCC Executive Committee at its February 1998 meeting open the discussion about eventual changes regarding forms of participation and decision-making and agree on a process of consultation which might continue until the assembly, and that a recommendation be presented to the assembly. It was also suggested to continue the wider discussion on Orthodox participation in WCC.

The aide-memoire was referred to the Programme Sub-committee.

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At a later session, Dr Kässmann presented the Sub-committee's report. It proposed, and the Executive Committee **agreed to adopt** the following minute about the visit, as amended:

*The Executive Committee received a report on the visit to the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), and expressed its appreciation for the efforts made by the Officers of the WCC and the ROC leadership to address continuing concerns regarding the ROC's participation in the WCC. The report and the discussion offered an opportunity for the Executive Committee to be informed about the situation in the ROC and to discuss wider issues of Orthodox participation in the WCC, including questions of structure, working style, ethos and decision-making in governing bodies of the WCC. The Executive Committee strongly encouraged the continuation of this process of dialogue, and noted with appreciation the steps already being taken to that end.*

Secondly, the Executive Committee

*instructed the General Secretary, on behalf of the Officers, to write to His Holiness Patriarch Alexis II, expressing gratitude for the hospitality granted*

*to the WCC delegation, and assuring the Russian Orthodox Church (on the basis of the above minute) that its concerns were being taken seriously into consideration.*

In discussion of these recommendations, Fr Hilarion pointed out that they did not include reference to the Executive discussing “eventual changes regarding forms of participation and decision-making and to agree on a process of consultation which might continue until the assembly”, as mentioned in the aide-mémoire. The reason for mentioning this was a discussion about the possibility of radical structural change in the WCC, and that this start now with setting up a working group so that the Executive could discuss the results in September and bring a recommendation to the assembly.

Dr Kässmann said the Sub-committee had taken note of this and believed it was covered in the above recommendation, which referred to the pre-assembly and Pan-Orthodox consultations. A report would be given to the Executive in September.

Fr Hilarion was concerned about a possible re-shaping of the WCC according to a new model: this was why another consultation was envisaged, following the one in Morges in 1996 when different models were suggested. This would give opportunity for people to suggest ways for making the WCC a “home” for everyone. Examples might include having a second category of membership, or to move from membership to representation, or to look at the “family” model.

Dr Tsetsis noted that the proposal to look at the family model proposal was not accepted by Central Committee in September, but he believed the discussion could be re-opened perhaps by the new Central Committee. The family model had already been discussed in Amsterdam but he did not believe it could easily work, first because the Orthodox resisted the fact that they were seen as a family of churches when in reality they believe they are the one, holy, apostolic church. Secondly, he did not feel it appropriate to speak of the Orthodox as one family in relation to the WCC when they cannot act as one family in solving their own Orthodox problems. But that did not mean efforts should not be made to find more meaningful ways of Orthodox participation in the WCC.

Fr Hilarion reiterated his opinion that a consultation be held in order to look at other possibilities for reorganising the Council so that it could be more acceptable for churches which would like to cooperate but which at present did not find it possible to be members, such as the Baptists in Russia.

The General Secretary was encouraged that the idea of the Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations was finding some support and he felt this could be an element for an acceptable way forward. The earlier consultation in Morges had been a



good beginning but it seemed unrealistic to assume that specific proposals could be prepared in time for the Harare Assembly. So the intention was first to identify the agenda, which would include some analysis of those models that had already been suggested, and to consider whether it was realistic to pursue one of them further.

## 9. FINANCIAL MATTERS

### A. Finance Presentation

Ms Birgitta Rantakari, moderator of the Finance Sub-committee, introduced members of the new staff finance team. Reference was made to the reorganisation of the Finance Department.

Mr Robert Christeler indicated that, subject to audit, the 1997 results were fairly good with respect to the operating budget. 1998 was to be a zero deficit year, which had entailed some difficult decisions in relation to some departments and activities; such stop-gap measures could not be repeated and the problems would have to be addressed in a longer-term fashion in order to prepare for a balanced future.

A number of management weaknesses had been addressed within the Finance Department that had arisen over the years as a result of the changing environment - the increasing complexity of financial markets and investment portfolios for example had become a greater challenge. New arrangements had been made in the area of sub-contracting services.

The *Etat de Genève* had processed the Council's application for a grant for renovation of the Ecumenical Centre, but would make no commitment until later in the year. It was hoped that work could begin in August or September.

Ms Carol Abel, Finance Manager, spoke to the summary of management accounts, noting that income for 1997 had been better than expected while expenditure had been less.

In the past there had been no clear understanding about what should be included under a given budget line - different sections of the house tended to interpret these in different ways, and budgets were built on the basis of the information provided by the separate parts. Now efforts were being made to move to a clearer definition of what should be included under each budget line and to be consistent throughout the house. This practice made valid comparisons between actual results and budget very difficult.

Ms Joan Geuss reported on the 1998 budget, noting the instruction from Central

Committee to produce a new budget with no deficit. The measures taken to achieve this had only been possible because 1998 was an assembly year and certain activities would be reduced. The following exchange rates had been used: US\$ 1.35; SK .20; DM .85.

Two income-monitoring officers had been appointed to see that income comes in at the right time according to the pledge, and to analyse any differences in income vis à vis the budget, as well as the exposure to exchange rate fluctuation.

Mr Costa Mustaklem gave an analysis of income received/receivable in the years 1995 - 1999, noting that there was a downward trend. The 1999 "scenario" plan provided for "best" and "worst" case income scenarios, but both resulted in a deficit.

It was clear that the task of generating income had become more difficult than in the past. Income was going down because of structural changes in church financing, which meant that everyone was looking for alternative sources of income. Since the market was highly competitive, this was not easy, and was not likely to improve in the foreseeable future.

Mr Rath, director of OICD, noted that nevertheless the general income situation had slightly improved over the past two years. The minimum membership fee had led to some churches sending minimum contributions which meant a small increase in undesignated income. The general downward trend reflected the situation of churches in Sweden and Germany, and church-related agencies, although some positive signals were coming from the US.

Responding to a question about the Ecumenical Development Initiative (EDI), Mr Rath indicated that it would probably phase out by the end of 1998, and there were no plans yet as to how to continue efforts at fund-raising in the USA. Over the last six years about 1 million US\$ had been received by the WCC and the NCCCUSA - a small return in relation to the investment made. The Bossey campaign had however done better than previously.

Efforts to raise funds in north-east Asia had not been very successful, and with the present crisis in the region the situation did not look very positive.

With regard to the agencies, it was important to stress the dimension of partnership as opposed to fund-raising. The Council must take them seriously if it expects to be taken seriously by them, and a style of relating still has to be developed.

Investment results in 1997 had been generally satisfactory, with one exception. The WCC was increasingly dependent on investment revenue and good performance from its asset managers.



Concluding the presentation, Ms Rantakari reiterated the need for disciplined budget control and increased income; the fact that the 1997 results were better than anticipated did not mean that vigilance could be relaxed. It was therefore necessary to plan now for the period after the assembly in order to obtain the resources required.

## **B. Report of the Finance Sub-committee**

Ms Rantakari presented the Sub-committee's report, noting that it had met on two occasions during this Executive Committee.

### **1. 1997 Results**

The Sub-committee received the draft unaudited financial results for 1997, which showed a surplus in operating costs before transfers of CHF 1.7 million. It noted that, while this result in itself was satisfactory, a number of factors needed to be taken into consideration.

Income exceeded budget by 4%, much of which was due to a beneficial dollar exchange rate compared with that used for the budget. In addition, it included contributions from 16 member churches which had not previously contributed. 30.7% of the undesignated income was received in the last quarter of the year.

Expenses had been limited to 90.8% of the budget. The ability to recognise the need to limit spending had been enhanced by the quarterly reporting to Management which began in June 1997 and was improved by September: at that point, there was a deficit of CHF 724,000.

The good operating result should however be received with caution. Given the income projections for 1998 and beyond, it did not represent any optimal level of business. In addition, the Council had inherited from its past a number of items which needed to be written off, and which would affect the result for the year, albeit on a one-off basis. The Council's reserves were also very low, and any surplus would quickly be absorbed in trying to rebuild them.

### **2. 1998 Budget**

The final version of the budget, with overhead costs and undesignated income (UDI) having been distributed, had been presented for approval. Although it was a "break even" budget, this had been achieved only at considerable pain in many areas.

-- Communications had suffered reductions in production budgets, only sustainable because it was an Assembly year in which their work was geared

towards and budgeted for by the Assembly.

-- Computer Services had had their computer replacement budget almost removed, justifiable only because a number of staff would leave the Council and their machines could be re-distributed to ensure that reasonable minimum technology standards were maintained.

-- ENI had agreed to take a one-off reduction in its contribution from the WCC of CHF 150,000 ( on a normal contribution of CHF 650,000)

-- Meetings and Consultations budgets had been reduced in the light of this being an Assembly year with a focus towards the preparation of that event.

Thus, given the measures required to balance the 1998 budget and the 1999 income projections, considerable work would have to be undertaken in order to balance future budgets, and allow for the re-building of reserves.

The Sub-committee also received the latest forecast of assembly income and expenditure which showed a deficit of CHF 213,000. It noted that the forecast was now based on more complete information and estimates and encouraged further work to be undertaken to project a break-even position, at the same time assessing priorities to facilitate remedial action should that become necessary. The Sub-committee noted that the expenditure forecast now exceeded the budget of CHF 11 million, but accepted the explanation of the addition of a contingency item of 5.5% and insurance against cancellation in the sum of CHF 150,000 as the main reasons for this excess.

While the forecast showed received and pledged income of CHF 6.8 million, OICD remained confident that at least another CHF 400,000 would be achievable towards the original request of CHF 8 million.

The Sub-committee was invited to consider the situation caused by the fact that churches had not managed to nominate 25% youth as delegates to the assembly, and to offer budgetary and procedural proposals to address this issue.

The Sub-committee also reviewed the provisional budget for the Women's Decade Festival celebrations planned in Harare preceding the assembly, and noted that the income for these celebrations was less than certain. The 1996 Central Committee report from the Unit III Committee had given an assurance that resources would be sought outside the usual WCC channels. The Sub-committee requested that the use of excess project funds for events such as the Beijing conference be agreed with the funding partners before being committed. Furthermore, there was a difference of some CHF 50,000 between the amount requested from the assembly budget and that which was provided in that budget



for this event. The meeting planned for 24 February when clarity would be sought on the budgetary issues was endorsed.

Dr Kässmann, moderator of the ENI Board, underlined the fact that ENI had only agreed to accept a reduction in contribution from the WCC on condition that such a request was not repeated. ENI could not survive into 1999 without the Council's support.

Regarding the Decade Festival, she affirmed that the search for funds from outside normal circles was continuing, in accordance with the agreement made in 1996. But more time was needed.

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee **agreed**

- *to **approve** the balanced 1998 budget as presented, noting that there was no contingency provision, that the budget could not bear an overspend from the assembly, and that it would require careful monitoring and, if necessary, corrective action to achieve a break even.*
- *that, mindful of the resolution of Central Committee in 1996 that subsidies would not be provided to delegates from those churches which failed to contribute membership monies OR to provide an explanation which would excuse them from this responsibility, to **authorise** OICD to pursue adequate sponsorship from Mission Agencies and outside of the Assembly Budget to enable the 25% representation target to be met.*
- *to **instruct** staff to undertake further work to assess the viability of the Decade Festival budget and therefore the project, and that if, by 15 May 1998, the project could not be demonstrated to be viable, the General Secretary be asked to take a decision about the form in which the project may continue.*

### **3. 1999 Scenario**

The Finance Sub-committee looked at six possible scenarios for 1999, each based on a best case and worst case income projection supplied in December 1997 by OICD.

The first three scenarios based on 1998 levels of expenditure proved untenable. The second three were based on initial information coming from the Staff Group on Internal Organisation, reintroducing incremental remuneration

dependent upon inflation and performance and offering two levels of reduction in the flexible element of the employer's contribution to the Pension Fund. This second series of scenarios still resulted in a deficit.

Ms Rantakari explained the three different contributions made to the Pension Fund: (1) 7% of basic salary of staff person (mandatory); (2) 7% of basic salary contributed by the WCC (mandatory); (3) an additional contribution by the WCC, up to 7%, to ensure the financial stability of the Fund. The WCC had been making this latter contribution to the maximum level without considering whether it was in fact necessary. For this reason the Pension Fund Board (PFB) had asked that a "dynamic review" be carried out to see if this maximum was necessary to maintain the stability of the Fund.

The General Secretary underlined the importance of such a study in order to gain assurance that not only was the Council observing the legal obligations but that the health of the PF was assured in the long term. The study would be completed by June and a proposal brought to the Executive in September.

The Executive Committee **agreed** to the following recommendation:

*in the light of these scenarios, to request the General Secretary to engage in an iterative process to bring expenditure into line with projected income for 1999, and to pursue the reduction of the variable element of the employer's contribution to the Pension Fund, ensuring that all legal obligations were met and that the financial equilibrium of the fund would be assured.*

#### **4. Income Trends and Strategy**

The Sub-committee received information concerning the income trends from 1995 through to the 1999 projections. It noted that communication of a more concise view of the Council and its work was a key to increasing income, and that this opportunity should not be missed at the Assembly. Proposals included a Padare event, the Finance Committee focus and other special events designed to raise the income of the WCC from its member churches and other partners.

*Cash Projection and Income Monitoring System:* OICD presented their newly developed system for recording pledges and actual income over time, which also calculated the exchange variance and the size of contribution variance. The system would be provided with all available information, including that related to projects and activities. The results would then be used by the Treasury team in the Finance department to plan cash flow, to plan investment needs against cash needs, and to plan the currency exposure. The Sub-committee considered



this development a good tool for monitoring and managing.

*OICD action plan:* As part of its strategic development, OICD would in future seek to work more closely with the Cluster Directors and staff. To this end, it had begun an action plan for 1998, suggesting a programme of contact for all key funding partners. This would then be added to by the Cluster Directors and presented to the Management Team for adoption as a housewide venture.

*Reporting:* The Sub-committee heard that, following many requests from partners, the reporting on use of the income was being reviewed. This review was looking both at reporting from implementing partners and reporting to Church and Agency funding partners. An internal team taken from the programme units, OICD and Finance, had developed proposals and would invite two of the present Directors to adopt the testing of these proposals, with a view to some conclusions being reached by the end of 1998.

## **5. Internal Organisation**

The Finance Sub-committee reviewed the documents dealing with the internal organisation and passed its comments to the Programme Sub-committee which was coordinating the response of the Executive Committee.

## **6. Investments**

The Sub-committee heard a presentation on the WCC's investment portfolios, endowment and general, Swiss Franc and US Dollar. It noted that the performance of the overall portfolios had been reasonable - with the exception of one fund manager who had shown a similarly poor investment income performance for the WCC and its Pension Fund. Members endorsed the decision of the Council to continue to monitor the performance of this manager and, together with the Pension Fund Board, to reconsider the future of this manager at the end of June 1998, and to seek the advice of a member or members of the Investment Advisory Group (IAG) in this regard.

During the year, the Council benefitted from realised gains on the sale of investments in the sum of CHF 1.3 million, and, at the end of the year, was also recording unrealised gains on the US Dollar portfolio in the same amount.

The Sub-committee encouraged the Council to find ways to rebuild its investment base to secure investment income which had now become part of the core income of the Council.

The General Secretary asked whether the FSC had discussed the question of what an

appropriate investment base should be in order to realise investment income on the level considered desirable for the core budget of the Council. He explained that the WCC had been holding considerable investments, both long- and short-term, resulting from funds made available to be used for specific projects. Unit IV had decided to use the reserves held because donors did not wish to make further contributions while funds were still in hand. The total base of the Council's investments had thus been reduced considerably.

This was a policy question where the interests of the Council, the donors, and ultimately of the third parties who would benefit from the funds, have to be matched with one another.

Dr Raiser felt it would be helpful both for the FSC and for the Assembly Finance Committee to have a paper setting out the nature of the different reserves held by the Council, the policy we have for maintaining them at a desirable level, and what reserves may still require to be instituted. An example was the renovation of the Ecumenical Centre which had become necessary and for which the Council had no reserves, the repair fund only being sufficient to cover normal repairs. It was clear that a repair/replacement reserve should be established for the two properties owned by the WCC.

## **7. Global Custody**

The Sub-committee heard a presentation on the benefits to be gained under a Global Custody arrangement, whereby one investment banker would be retained to take physical possession of all the investments and effect purchases and sales as directed by the portfolio managers, and to provide management information to the client (WCC) in a common format which would make the various portfolios more easily comparable. The portfolio managers would continue to manage the funds entrusted to them. Reductions in cost of the portfolio managers would largely be offset by the cost incurred in engaging a global custodian, but the added value would come in the improved reporting and global view and advice which may be given. It would also guard against loss should it be decided to move investments from one manager to another, as the shares would not need to be sold and bought by the managers.

Quotations had been received from two banks and a third had quoted for offering the reporting service only. It was likely that Lombard Odier would be chosen as Global Custodian.

Responding to a request for clarification on the issue of Global Custody, Ms Abel explained that it meant that all investments for a given organisation were held by one single investment banker, as opposed to being distributed among several managers. One of the advantages was that the management of the funds, the dealing in investments, was



centralised, and because of the economy achieved, the dealings were cheaper, and measurable against a benchmark. This meant they could more easily advise a client like the Council what its course of action should be.

Mr Christeler affirmed that staff had done exploratory work and discussed the matter with the investment managers. There was no question as to the financial health and integrity of Lombard Odier and he believed the proposal was sound. From the legal standpoint, it was becoming increasingly current practice to use global custody schemes which facilitate administration and reporting, and he had no hesitation in recommending the proposal for adoption by the Executive.

The General Secretary asked whether the proposal had been considered by the Investment Advisory Group (IAG). As this body had been set up at the instigation of the Executive he felt their advice should be sought prior to any decision being made by the Executive Committee on this issue.

As this proposal had been elaborated subsequent to the last meeting of the IAG, and as only one of its members had so far been consulted on the matter, it was proposed that a decision be postponed. Ms Rantakari pointed out that the Pension Fund Board had decided to take this step in April, and she felt it would be wiser if the Executive could make its decision at this time in order to obtain the maximum benefits to both parties..

After further discussion, the Executive Committee **agreed** on the following recommendation as amended:

*to request the detailed working out of a proposal for the WCC to move to Global Custody and the presentation of such a proposal to the Investment Advisory Group; to encourage the Finance Strategy Working Group to work further on the issue and bring a firm recommendation for implementation to the Executive Committee in September 1998.*

The Executive Committee **received** the report of the Finance Sub-committee with appreciation.

## 10. REPORT OF THE PROGRAMME SUB-COMMITTEE

(NB: The following matters are reported on under the respective sections in these minutes: Internal Organisation, Statement on Vision, Eighth Assembly, Background Note on Multilateral Agreement on Investment, Reflections on

Orthodox-WCC Relations and report on Visit to the Russian Orthodox Church).

In the absence of Rev. Nélide Ritchie, the report was presented by Dr Margot Kässmann.

**A. Aide-mémoire on Consultation on Ecumenical Concerns about the issue of Sexual Orientation, September 1997**

On recommendation of the Sub-committee the Executive Committee **received** with gratitude the helpful aide-mémoire on this consultation. It **agreed**

- *that attention should be drawn to the need for sensitivities on the part of churches as they bring this issue in the context of the Padare;*
- *that the drafting of the statement on Human Rights take account of the issues raised in relation to this matter both in plenary and in Programme Sub-committee discussion.*

Dr Kässmann affirmed that the criteria for the Padare required that all applications to take part in the Padare be accompanied by a covering letter of recommendation from a member church or NCC; all applications were being carefully monitored by staff.

**B. Forum of Christian Churches and Ecumenical Organisations**

Following the decision of Central Committee in September 1997 (minutes, p.57) that a process of consultation be set up involving churches, ecumenical organisations, confessional families and ecumenical associations of different sorts in order to develop the idea of a Forum, the Sub-committee received a progress report on further steps taken in the meantime. The General Secretary had consulted on the idea of a Forum with the heads of some confessional families and ecumenical associations, as well as of other interested bodies. The Roman Catholic Church had expressed willingness to be part of the consultative process from the beginning.

The majority of reactions to the proposal indicated that the Forum should be open to Christian churches and ecumenical organisations. Representatives of other faiths could be invited to participate as resource persons in order to give it a wider perspective on given topics. The goals of the Forum were not perceived by all in the same way, but most thought that it should be an expression of the diversity and richness of the whole people of God.

It was suggested that an organising committee be set up, comprising representatives of



CWCs, or the WCC, or both, to call the first exploratory meeting. This would be evaluated before any decision were made to continue on a regular basis (proposals ranged from every 3-4 years to once every decade).

On recommendation of the Sub-committee, the Executive Committee

*expressed appreciation for the progress report and encouraged further exploration of issues as well as the calling of a consultation to examine the proposal in more detail with key partners.*

### **C. Aide-mémoire on meeting between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches, December 1997**

In view of the internal structural changes in the WCC, as well as efforts to create an Ecumenical Forum (see above) as a new instrument of the ecumenical movement, Cardinal Cassidy of the PCPCU and Dr Raiser of the WCC agreed to call a meeting in order to share information, to express mutual concerns and to reflect together on possibilities for shaping a process which was about to begin. This meeting took place in Rome in December 1997, with six representatives of PCPCU and five from the WCC.

The first agenda item related to WCC structures, particularly those in which the RCC had cooperated in the past and wished to continue in the future: Faith and Order; World Mission and Evangelism; Education and Ecumenical Formation; Collaboration on Justice, Peace and Creation, and on Diakonal Services. Secondly, attention was given to the Forum as an instrument of service to the ecumenical movement, and eventually its potential for the celebration of the Year 2000.

The Sub-committee recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

*to receive the aide-mémoire and to express appreciation for the ongoing relationships; further, it looked forward to further assessment of the consultative process at its next meeting in September 1998.*

### **D. Relations with Pentecostals**

A report had been shared on a meeting held in November 1997 organised by the Office of Church and Ecumenical Relations with a group of Pentecostals from various parts of the world and members of WCC member churches. The aim had been to bring to some stage of fruition the various consultations and contacts with Pentecostals developed over the past years, and to place the dialogue in the perspective of CUV and the Assembly.

The meeting was marked by an atmosphere of openness and commitment on both sides to listen to each other and engage in a frank exchange of views. Participants affirmed the need to develop the relationships further so that the dialogue between Pentecostals and the WCC, based on common faith in Christ, could become a search for common witness to the truth. The meeting agreed to two proposals: a) to form an ad-hoc group of Pentecostals from within and outside the WCC constituency to work on Pentecostal presence and participation at Harare; and b) to propose the formation of a *joint working group* between the WCC and Pentecostals as soon as possible after the Assembly. Such a group would assume joint responsibility for the continuation of the dialogue and deepening of relationships.

The Sub-committee considered the report and the proposals for action. It recommended, and the Executive Committee **agreed**

*to receive the report, and to accept the proposal to create a joint working group with Pentecostals following the Eighth Assembly of the WCC in Harare.*

## 12. REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON STAFFING

### Staffing Report

In a closed session, Dr Best presented the Staffing Report:

The Executive Committee **authorised** the General Secretary to proceed with the following appointments and contract extensions, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contracts or contract extensions.

#### 1. APPOINTMENTS/INTERNAL TRANSFERS

##### *General Secretariat*

- **Mr Georges Lemopoulos** (Turkey, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople [Eastern]) at present Executive Secretary for Church and Ecumenical Relations, be appointed as Deputy General Secretary for five years from an agreed date (to be ratified by postal vote of the Central Committee)

##### *Cluster on Issues and Themes*

- **Rev. Sam Kobia** (Kenya, Methodist Church in Kenya) at present Executive Director, Unit III, be appointed Director from an agreed date (current contract valid until 31 August 2000)



*Cluster on Issues and Themes - Mission and Evangelism*

- **Rev. Jacques Matthey** (Switzerland, Swiss Protestant Church Federation) be appointed Executive Secretary for Ecumenical Mission Study for four years from an agreed date

*Cluster on Relations and Constituencies*

- **Rev. Myra Blyth** (UK, Baptist Union of Great Britain) at present Executive Director, Unit IV, be appointed Director from an agreed date (current contract valid until 31 May 2001)

## 2. CONTRACT EXTENSIONS

All the contract extensions listed below are for **three years** unless otherwise stated:

*Cluster on Issues and Themes - Faith and Order*

- **Mr Peter Bouteneff** (USA, Orthodox Church in America [Eastern]) at present Executive Secretary, Faith and Order, from 1 July 1999 (will complete 7 years' service)

*Cluster on Relations and Constituencies - Interreligious Relations and Dialogue*

- **Rev. Hans Ucko** (Sweden, Church of Sweden) at present Executive Secretary (Christian-Jewish, New Religious Movements) from 1 September 1999 (will complete 13 years' service)

*Cluster on Finance, Service and Administration - Finance*

- **Ms Irène Duraffourd** (France, Roman Catholic Church) at present Finance Officer, as Accountant, from 1 July 1999 (will complete 24 years' service)

## 3. RATIFICATION OF OFFICERS' DECISIONS - December 1997

It was reported that the Officers made the following decisions at their meeting in December 1997:

A. Appointments - Internal Transfers*Unit IV - ECLOF*

- **Mr George Petty** (USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) previously Consultant, as Programme Secretary for four years from 1 January 1998 (will complete 5 years 4 months' service)

*General Secretariat - Ecumenical Institute, Bossey*

- **Mr Michel Monjol** (France, Roman Catholic Church) previously Finance Officer, Unit III, as Hospitality Manager for three years from 1 January 1998 (will complete 22 years 6 months' service)

- **Fr Dr Ioan Sauca** (Romania, Romanian Orthodox Church (Eastern)) previously Executive Secretary for Orthodox Studies and Relationship in Mission, Unit II, as Lecturer/Executive Secretary for 3 years 4 months from 1 February 1998 (will complete 7 years' service)

- *Department of Communication*

- **Mr Jan Kok** (Netherlands, Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) previously Director, as Publications Manager for three years from 1 January 1999 (will complete 27 years 7 months' service)

B. Contract Extensions

*Unit II*

- **Dr Gert Rüppell** (Finland, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland) Executive Secretary for Studies and Education, for three years from 1 February 1999 (will complete 7 years' service)

*Unit IV*

- **Dr Helene Moussa** (Canada, Coptic Orthodox Church [Oriental]) Executive Secretary for Uprooted People, for two months from 1 November 1998 (will complete 4 years 7 months' service)

*General Secretariat - Office of Communication*

- **Rev. John Newbury** (UK, Methodist Church) Press and Information Officer, for 3 months from 1 January 1999 (will complete 5 years 3 months' service)

4. VACANCIES

*Cluster on Issues and Themes - Mission and Evangelism*

Executive Secretary for health and healing

Executive Secretary for mission: community and justice

*Cluster on Issues and Themes - Justice, Peace and Creation*

Executive Secretary for Economy and Justice

*Cluster on Relations and Constituencies - Regional Relations*

Executive Secretary for Middle East

*Cluster on Relations and Constituencies - Ecumenical Relations*

Executive Secretary for Church and Ecumenical Relations

*General Secretariat - Ecumenical Institute, Bossey*

Lecturer/Executive Secretary



## APPENDIX TO STAFFING DOCUMENT - INFORMATION

A. Departures

It was reported that the following staff members had left, or would leave, the service of the World Council of Churches on the dates indicated:

*Unit I*

- **Rev. Prof. Dr Thomas FitzGerald** (USA, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Archdiocese of America [Eastern]) Executive Director, on 31 December 1998 (will complete 4 years 6 months' service)
- **Dr Judo Poerwowidagdo** (Indonesia, Javanese Christian Churches in Central Java) Executive Secretary, on 31 December 1998 (will complete 8 years 4 months' service)

*Unit II*

- **Dr Rexford Asante** (Ghana, Presbyterian Church of Ghana) Executive Secretary, on 31 December 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)
- **Dr Daleep Mukarji** (India, Church of North India) Executive Secretary for Urban Rural Mission, on 31 March 1998 (will complete 4 years' service)
- **Ms Diana Smith** (UK, Church of England [Anglican]) Executive Secretary for Health and Learning Materials, on 30 June 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)

*Unit IV*

- **Ms Salwa Morcos** (Egypt, Coptic Orthodox Church [Oriental]) Executive Secretary for the Middle East, on 31 December 1998 (will complete 7 years' service)
- **Dr Helene Moussa** (Canada, Coptic Orthodox Church [Oriental]) Executive Secretary for Uprooted People, on 31 December 1998 (will complete 4 years 7 months' service)
- **Mr Patrick Taran** (USA, Society of Friends General Conference) Executive Secretary for Migration, on 31 December 1998 (will complete 8 years 6 months' service)

*Unit IV - ECLOF*

- **Ms Margarita Banda** (Argentina, Evangelical Methodist Church in Uruguay) Executive Secretary, on 31 October 1998 (will complete 6 years' service)

*General Secretariat - Ecumenical Institute, Bossey*

- **Dr Beate Stierle** (FRG, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover [EKiD]) Tutor/Executive Secretary, on 31 December 1998 (will complete 7 years 4 months' service)

*Finance and Administration - OICD*

- **Mr Peter Tallon** (UK, Roman Catholic Church) Proposals and Reports Coordinator, on 31 October 1998 (will complete 4 years 10 months' service)

## Central Services

- **Ms Malle Niilus** (Argentina, United Evangelical Lutheran Church) Director, on 30 April 1998 (will complete 15 years 7 months' service)

**B. Consultants**

It was reported that the following consultant was appointed by the General Secretary since the last Executive and Central Committee meetings in September 1997:

*Unit III*

- **Rev. Eugenio Poma Añaguaya** (Bolivia, Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia) Consultant on Indigenous Peoples Issues, for one year from 1 March 1998 (will complete 4 years' service)

It was reported that the following consultant will leave the service of the World Council of Churches on the date indicated:

*Finance and Administration - CIS*

- **Mr Robert Varga** (Switzerland, Roman Catholic Church) on 31 March 1998 (will complete 14 years 3 months' service)

(**NB:** Other items dealt with by the Sub-committee on Nominations are reported on under the respective chapter in these minutes: Applications for Membership; Amendments to the Constitution and Rules of the WCC; Gender Guidelines for the Geneva Secretariat; Eighth Assembly matters - the 15% category of delegates and Assembly Committee membership).

**12. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The next meeting of the Executive Committee was scheduled to take place in Amersfoort, Netherlands, 15-18 September 1998, followed by the 50th anniversary celebrations in Amsterdam on 19-20 September (arrival 14th, departure 20th).

The final meeting of this Executive would take place in Harare on 2-3 December 1998, immediately prior to the Eighth Assembly.



### **13. EVALUATION**

Dr Tolen proposed, and members agreed, that it would be helpful to do some evaluation of the work of this Executive Committee, in order to pass on a useful legacy to the incoming Executive Committee. The General Secretary suggested that a series of questions be circulated to members in advance.

### **14. CLOSING ACTIONS**

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, expressed his thanks to the General Secretary, to Mary Ann Lundy, and to all staff who had been involved in the work of this Executive Committee, as well as to the Bossey staff for their hospitality. He also thanked Dr Nababan and members for their active participation in the deliberations and decisions.

The meeting was adjourned at 14.15 hrs on 20 February 1998.

Bishop Anderson led the closing prayers.

## ATTENDANCE

- Presidents: Prof. Dr Anna-Marie Aagaard  
Bishop Vinton Anderson  
Ms Priyanka Mendis  
Dr Aaron Tolen
- Officers: H.H. Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia (Moderator)  
Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan (Vice-Moderator)  
Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser (General Secretary)
- Members: Dr Marion Best  
Mr John Briggs  
Rt Rev. Drexel Gomez  
Rev. Dr Margot Kässmann  
Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk  
Ms Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo  
Ms Beatrice Odonkor  
Ms Birgitta Rantakari  
Gr. Prot. Dr Georges Tsetsis  
Rt Rev. Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilus
- Apologies: Bishop Leslie Boseto  
Rev. Eunice Santana  
Pastora Nélide Ritchie (Vice-Moderator)  
Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina  
Ms Virginia Gcabashe  
Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky  
Rt Rev. Dr J. Henry Okullu  
Rev. Valamotu Palu  
His Holiness Pope Shenouda  
Bishop Melvin G. Talbert
- Substitute: Ms Tungane Williams



- Consultants: Fr Hilarion Alfeyev  
Prof. Ion Bria  
Bishop Jonas Jonson
- Visitors: Ms Vivienne Anderson  
Ms Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker  
Rev. Vrrur Demirjian
- Staff: Ms Jeanne Becher  
Rev. Myra Blyth  
Mr Robert Christeler  
Rev. Dwain Epps  
Rev. Dr Thomas FitzGerald  
Ms Aruna Gnanadason  
Mr Melaku Kifle  
Rev. Samuel Kobia  
Rev. Ana Langerak  
Mr Georges Lemopoulos  
Ms Mary Ann Lundy  
Mr Günter Rath  
Rev. Carlos Sintado  
Ms Jean Stromberg  
Mr Marlin VanElderen
- Interpreter: Ms Olga Piskunova
- Minute-writer: Ms Rosemary Green
- Administration: Ms Nan Braunschweiger  
Ms Ursula Zierl

## MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

### Sub-committee on Staffing and Nominations

Ephorus Dr Soritua Nababan	Moderator
Ms Marion Best	
Mr John Briggs	
Ms Virginia Gcabashe	(absent)
Bishop Drexel Gomez	
Metr. Kirill of Smolensk	(absent)
Rev. Valamotu Palu	(absent)
- Fr Hilarion Alfeyev	
- Ms Tungane Williams	

### Sub-committee on Finance

Ms Birgitta Rantakari	Moderator
Prof. Anne-Marie Aagaard	
Bishop Vinton Anderson	
Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky	(absent)
Ms Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo	
Bishop Henry Okullu	(absent)
Rev. Eunice Santana	(absent)
Bishop Melvin Talbert	(absent)

### Sub-committee on Programme

Rev. Nélide Ritchie	(absent) Moderator
Bishop Leslie Boseto	(absent)
Metr. Daniel of Moldavia & Bukovina	(absent)
Dr Margot Kässmann	Acting Moderator
Ms Priyanka Mendis	
Ms Beatrice Odonkor	
H.H. Pope Shenouda	(absent)
Dr Aaron Tolen	
Dr Georges Tsetsis	
Bishop Zacharias Mar Theophilos	
- Fr Ion Bria	



(March 1998)

APPENDIX III

## AMENDED CONSTITUTION AND RULES OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

### CONSTITUTION

(Amendments in bold print)

#### I. BASIS

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

#### II. MEMBERSHIP

Those churches shall be eligible for membership in the World Council of Churches which express their agreement with the Basis upon which the Council is founded and satisfy such criteria as the Assembly or the Central Committee may prescribe. Election to membership shall be by a two-thirds vote of the member churches represented at the Assembly, each member church having one vote. Any application for membership between meetings of the Assembly may be considered by the Central Committee; if the application is supported by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Committee present and voting, this action shall be communicated to the churches that are members of the World Council of Churches, and unless objection is received from more than one-third of the member churches within six months the applicant shall be declared elected.

#### III. PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS

**The World Council of Churches is constituted by the churches to serve the one ecumenical movement. It incorporates the work of the world movements for Faith and Order and Life and Work, the International Missionary Council, and the World Council of Christian Education.**

**The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.**

*In seeking koinonia in faith and life, witness and service, the churches through the Council will:*

- **promote the prayerful search for forgiveness and reconciliation in a spirit of mutual accountability, the development of deeper relationships through theological dialogue, and the sharing of human, spiritual and material resources with one another;**
- **facilitate common witness in each place and in all places, and support each other in their work for mission and evangelism;**
- **express their commitment to diakonia in serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, promoting one human family in justice and peace, and upholding the integrity of creation, so that all may experience the fullness of life;**
- **nurture the growth of an ecumenical consciousness through processes of education and a vision of life in community rooted in each particular cultural context;**
- **assist each other in their relationships to and with people of other faith communities;**
- **foster renewal and growth in unity, worship, mission and service.**

*In order to strengthen the one ecumenical movement, the Council will:*

- **nurture relations with and among churches, especially within but also beyond its membership;**
- **establish and maintain relations with national councils, regional conferences of churches, organizations of Christian World Communions and other ecumenical bodies;**
- **support ecumenical initiatives at regional, national and local levels;**
- **facilitate the creation of networks among ecumenical organizations;**
- **work towards maintaining the coherence of the one ecumenical movement in its diverse manifestations.**

#### IV. AUTHORITY

The World Council shall offer counsel and provide opportunity for united action in matters of common interest.

It may take action on behalf of constituent churches only in such matters as one or more of them may commit to it and only on behalf of such churches.

The World Council shall not legislate for the churches; nor shall it act for them in any manner except as indicated above or as may hereafter be specified by the constituent churches.



## V. ORGANISATION

The World Council shall discharge its functions through an Assembly, a Central Committee, an Executive Committee, and other subordinate bodies as may be established.

### 1. *The Assembly*

- a) The Assembly shall be the supreme legislative body governing the World Council and shall ordinarily meet at seven-year intervals.
- b) The Assembly shall be composed of official representatives of the member churches, known as delegates, elected by the member churches.
- c) The Assembly shall have the following functions:
  - 1) to elect not more than 145 members of the Central Committee from among the delegates which the member churches have elected to the Assembly;
  - 2) to elect not more than 5 members from among the representatives which the associate member churches have elected to the Assembly;
  - 3) to determine the **overall** policies of the World Council and to review programmes undertaken to implement policies previously adopted;
  - 4) to delegate to the Central Committee specific functions, except to amend this Constitution and to allocate the membership of the Central Committee granted by this Constitution to the Assembly exclusively.

### 2. *The Central Committee*

- a) The Central Committee shall be responsible for implementing the policies adopted by the Assembly and shall exercise the functions of the Assembly itself delegated to it by the Assembly between its meetings, except its power to amend this Constitution and to allocate or alter the allocation of the membership of Central Committee.
- b) The Central Committee shall be composed of the President or Presidents of the World Council of Churches and not more than 150 **voting** members.
  - 1) Not more than 145 members shall be elected by the Assembly from among the delegates the member churches have elected to the Assembly. Such members shall be distributed among the member churches by the Assembly giving due regard to the size of the churches and confessions represented in the Council, the number of churches of each confession which are members of the Council, reasonable geographical and cultural balance, and adequate representation of the major interests of the Council.

- 2) Not more than 5 members shall be elected by the Assembly from among the representatives whom the associate member churches have elected to the Assembly.
  - 3) A vacancy in the membership of the Central Committee, occurring between meetings of the Assembly, shall be filled by the Central Committee itself after consultation with the church of which the person previously occupying the position was a member.
- c) The Central Committee shall have, in addition to the general powers set out in (a) above, the following powers:
- 1) **to elect the Presidents of the World Council of Churches;**
  - 2) to elect its Moderator and Vice-Moderator or Vice-Moderators from among the members of the Central Committee;
  - 3) to elect the Executive Committee from among the members of the Central Committee;
  - 4) to elect committees, **commissions**, and boards:
  - 5) **within the policies adopted by the Assembly, and on the recommendation of the Programme Committee, to initiate and terminate programme and activities and to set priorities for the work of the Council;**
  - 6) to adopt the budget of the World Council and secure its financial support;
  - 7) to elect the General Secretary and to elect or appoint or to make provision for the election or appointment of all members of the staff of the World Council;
  - 8) to plan for the meetings of the Assembly, making provision for the conduct of its business, for worship and study, and for common Christian commitment. The Central Committee shall determine the number of delegates to the Assembly and allocate them among the member churches giving due regard to the size of the churches and confessions represented in the Council; the number of churches of each confession which are members of the Council; reasonable geographical and cultural balance; the desired distribution among church officials, parish ministers and lay persons; among men, women and young people; and participation by persons whose special knowledge and experience will be needed;
  - 9) to delegate specific functions to the Executive Committee or to other bodies or persons.

### 3. *Rules*

The Assembly or the Central Committee may adopt and amend Rules not inconsistent with this Constitution for the conduct of the business of the World Council.



#### 4. *By-laws*

The Assembly or the Central Committee may adopt and amend By-Laws not inconsistent with this Constitution for the functioning of its committees, boards, working groups and commissions.

#### 5. *Quorum*

A quorum for the conduct of any business by the Assembly or the Central Committee shall be one-half of its membership.

### VI. OTHER ECUMENICAL CHRISTIAN ORGANISATIONS

1. Such world confessional bodies and such **international** ecumenical organisations as may be designated by the Central Committee may be invited to send non-voting representatives to the Assembly and to the Central Committee, in such numbers as the Central Committee shall determine.
2. Such national councils and regional conferences of churches, other Christian councils and missionary councils as may be designated by the Central Committee may be invited to send non-voting representatives to the Assembly and to the Central Committee, in such numbers as the Central Committee shall determine.

### VII. AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the delegates to the Assembly present and voting, provided that the proposed amendment shall have been reviewed by the Central Committee, and notice of it sent to the member churches not less than six months before the meeting of the Assembly. The Central Committee itself, as well as the member churches, shall have the right to propose such amendment.

## RULES

(Amendments in bold print)

(Amendments to Rule I and Rule IV in italics, cf. pp. 7 and 14)

### I. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

Members of the Council are those churches which, having constituted the Council or having been admitted to membership, continue in membership. The term "church" as used in this article includes an association, convention or federation of autonomous churches. A group of churches within a country or region may determine to participate in the World Council of Churches as one church. The General Secretary shall maintain the official list of member churches noting any special arrangement accepted by the Assembly or Central Committee.

The following rules shall pertain to membership:

#### 1. *Application*

A church which wishes to become a member of the World Council of Churches shall apply in writing to the General Secretary.

#### 2. *Processing*

The General Secretary shall submit all such applications to the Central Committee (see Art. II of the Constitution) together with such information as he or she considers necessary to enable the Assembly or the Central Committee to make a decision on the application.

#### 3. *Criteria*

In addition to expressing agreement with the Basis upon which the Council is founded (Art. I of the Constitution), an applicant must satisfy the following criteria to be eligible for membership:

- a) A church must be able to take the decision to apply for membership without obtaining the permission of any other body or person.
- b) A church must produce evidence of sustained independent life and organization.
- c) A church must recognize the essential interdependence of the churches, particularly those of the same confession, and must practise constructive



ecumenical relations with other churches within its country or region. *This will normally mean that the church is a member of the national council of churches or similar body and of the regional ecumenical organisation.*

#### 4. *Size*

- a) *In addition to the criteria under Rule I.3 an applicant church must ordinarily have at least 25,000 members. The Central Committee may decide for exceptional reasons to admit into membership a church that does not fulfil the criterion of size.*
- b) *Churches in the same country or region that do not fulfil the criterion of size may jointly apply for membership and are encouraged by the World Council to do so.*

#### 5. *Associate membership*

- a) *A church otherwise eligible for membership, may be elected to associate membership in the same manner as member churches are elected:*
  - 1) *if the applicant would be denied membership solely under Rule I.4(a). A church applying for associate membership for this reason must ordinarily have at least 10,000 members;*
  - 2) *if the applicant, for reasons which must be approved by the Central Committee, expresses its desire to be in associate membership.*
- b) *An associate member church may participate in all activities of the Council; its representatives to the Assembly shall have the right to speak but not to vote. Associate member churches shall be listed separately on the official list maintained by the General Secretary.*
- c) *Each associate member church shall make an annual contribution to the general budget of the Council. The amount of the contribution shall be agreed upon in consultation between the church and the Council and shall be regularly reviewed.*
- d) *Each associate member church shall, in ways commensurate with its resources and in consultation with the Council, participate in assuming responsibility for the costs of the programmes of the WCC and for expenses related to travel and accommodation of its representatives to WCC events.*
- e) *The implications of not fulfilling such obligations shall be such as the Central Committee shall decide.*

## 6. *Financial participation*

- a) *Each member church shall make an annual contribution to the general budget of the Council. The amount of the contribution shall be agreed upon in consultation between the church and the Council and shall be regularly reviewed.*
- b) *Each member church shall, in ways commensurate with its resources and in consultation with the Council, participate in assuming responsibility for the costs of the programmes of the WCC and for expenses related to travel and accommodation of its representatives to WCC events.*
- c) *The implications of not fulfilling such obligations shall be such as the Central Committee shall decide.*

## 7. *Consultation*

Before admitting a church to membership or associate membership, the appropriate world confessional body or bodies and national council or regional ecumenical organisation shall be consulted.

## 8. *Resignation*

A church which desires to resign its membership in the Council can do so at any time. A church which has resigned but desires to rejoin the Council must again apply for membership.

[Note: In accordance with Rule XVII amendments to Rule I need to be confirmed by the Assembly. The amendments in *italics* in this Rule are therefore subject to confirmation by the Eighth Assembly in 1998.]

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the World Council of Churches signifies faithfulness to the Basis of the Council, fellowship in the Council, participation in the life and work of the Council and commitment to the ecumenical movement as integral to the mission of the church. Churches which are members of the World Council of Churches are expected to:

- 1) appoint delegates to the WCC Assembly, the major policy-making body of the Council, and participate in council with other member churches in shaping the ecumenical vision and the ecumenical agenda;



- 2) inform the WCC of their primary concerns, priorities, activities and constructive criticisms as they may relate to WCC programmes as well as any matters which they feel need expression of ecumenical solidarity or which merit the attention of the WCC and/or churches around the world;
- 3) communicate the meaning of ecumenical commitment, to foster and encourage ecumenical relations and action at all levels of their church life and to pursue ecumenical fellowship locally, nationally, regionally and internationally;
- 4) interpret both the broader ecumenical movement and the WCC, its nature, purpose and programmes throughout their membership as a normal part of their own reporting to their constituency;
- 5) encourage participation in WCC programmes, activities and meetings, including:
  - a) to propose persons who could make a particular contribution to and/or participate in the various committees of the WCC, meetings and consultations, WCC programmes and publications and staff;
  - b) to establish links between their own programme offices and the appropriate WCC programme offices; and
  - c) to submit materials for and to promote WCC communications resources: books, periodicals and other publications;
- 6) respond to decisions of the Central Committee which call for study, action or other follow-up by the member churches as well as respond to requests on matters referred by the Central or Executive Committee or the General Secretary for prayer, advice, information or opinion.

### III. THE ASSEMBLY

#### 1. *Composition of the Assembly*

##### a) Persons with the right to speak and vote

The Assembly shall be composed of .... official representatives of the member churches, known as delegates, elected by the member churches, with the right to speak and with the sole rights to vote and to propose and second motions and amendments.

1. The Central Committee shall determine the number of delegates to the Assembly well in advance of its meeting.
2. The Central Committee shall determine the percentage of the delegates, not less than 85 per cent, who shall be both nominated and elected by the member

churches. Each member church shall be entitled to a minimum of one delegate. The Central Committee shall allocate the other delegates in this part among the member churches giving due regard to the size of the churches and confessions represented in the Council, and the number of churches of each confession which are members of the Council, and reasonable geographical and cultural balance. The Central Committee shall recommend the proper distribution within delegations among church officials, parish ministers and lay persons; and among men, women and young people. The Central Committee may make provision for the election by the member churches of alternate delegates who shall serve only in place of such delegates who are unable to attend meetings of the Assembly.

3. The remaining delegates, not more than 15 per cent, shall be elected by certain member churches upon nomination of the Central Committee as follows:
  - 1) If the Moderator or any Vice-Moderator of the Central Committee is not elected a delegate within the provisions of paragraph 2 above, the Central Committee shall nominate such officer to the member church of which such officer is a member. Paragraphs 5 and 6 below apply to such nominees.
  - 2) The Central Committee shall determine the categories of additional delegates necessary to achieve balance in respect of:
    - a) the varied sizes of churches and confessions;
    - b) the historical significance, future potential or geographical location and cultural background of particular churches, as well as the special importance of united churches;
    - c) the presence of persons whose special knowledge and experience will be necessary to the Assembly;
    - d) proportions of women, youth, lay persons and local pastors.
  - 3) The Central Committee shall invite the member churches to propose the names of persons in the categories so determined whom the churches would be willing to elect, if nominated by the Central Committee.
  - 4) The Central Committee shall nominate particular individuals from the list so compiled to the member church of which each individual is a member.
  - 5) If that member church elects the said nominee, he or she shall become an additional delegate of that member church.



- 6) The member churches shall not elect alternate delegates for such delegates.

Member churches are encouraged to consult regionally in the selection of the delegates described in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, provided that every delegate is elected by the church of which he or she is a member in accordance with its own procedures.

b) Persons with the right to speak but not to vote

In addition to the delegates, who alone have the right to vote, the following categories of persons may attend meetings of the Assembly with the right to speak:

1. Presidents and Officers: Any President or Presidents of the Council or Moderator or Vice-Moderator or Vice-Moderators of the Central Committee who have not been elected delegates by their churches.
2. Members of the retiring Central Committee: Any members of the retiring Central Committee who have not been elected delegates by their churches.
3. Representatives of associate member churches: Each associate member church may elect one representative.
4. Advisers: The Central Committee may invite a small number of persons who have a special contribution to make to the deliberations of the Assembly or who have participated in the activities of the World Council. Before an invitation is extended to an adviser who is a member of a member church, that church shall be consulted.
5. Delegated Representatives: The Central Committee may invite persons officially designated as Delegated Representatives by organizations with which the World Council maintains relationship.
6. Delegated Observers: The Central Committee may invite persons officially designated as Delegated Observers by non-member churches.

c) Persons without the right to speak or to vote

The Central Committee may invite to attend the meetings of the Assembly without the right to speak or to vote:

1. Observers: Persons identified with organizations with which the World Council maintains relationship which are not represented by Delegated Representatives or with non-member churches which are not represented by Delegated Observers.
2. Guests: Persons named individually.

## 2. *Presiding officers and committees*

- a) At the first business session of the Assembly the Central Committee shall present its proposals for the moderatorship of the Assembly and for the membership of the Business Committee of the Assembly and make any other proposals, including the appointment of other committees, their membership and functions, for the conduct of the business of the Assembly as it sees fit.
- b) At the first or second business session, additional nominations for membership of any committee may be made in writing by any six concurring delegates.
- c) Election shall be by ballot unless the Assembly shall otherwise determine.

## 3. *Agenda*

The agenda of the Assembly shall be proposed by the Central Committee to the first business session of the Assembly. Any delegate may move to amend the agenda by including an item or items of new business or by proposing any other change, which he or she may have previously proposed to the Central Committee or to the Business Committee after its election. New business or any change may be proposed by the Business Committee under Rule III.5(b) or by a delegate under Rule XVI.7.

## 4. *Nominations Committee of the Assembly*

- a) At an early session of the Assembly, the Assembly shall elect a Nominations Committee, on which there shall be appropriate confessional, cultural, and geographical representation of the membership of the Assembly and representation of the major interests of the World Council.
- b) The Nominations Committee in consultation with the officers of the World Council and the Executive Committee shall make nominations for the following:
 

...

  - 1) not more than 145 members of the Central Committee from among the delegates which the member churches have elected to the Assembly;
  - 2) not more than 5 members of the Central Committee from among the representatives which the associate member churches have elected to the Assembly.
- c) In making nominations, the Nominations Committee shall have regard to the following principles:
  - 1) the personal qualifications of the individual for the task for which he or she is to be nominated;
  - 2) fair and adequate confessional representation;



- 3) fair and adequate geographical and cultural representation;
- 4) fair and adequate representation of the major interests of the World Council.

The Nominations Committee shall satisfy itself as to the general acceptability of the nominations to the churches to which the nominees belong.

Not more than seven persons from any one member church shall be nominated as member of the Central Committee.

The Nominations Committee shall secure adequate representation of lay persons -- men, women and young people -- so far as the composition of the Assembly makes this possible.

- d) The Nominations Committee shall present its nominations to the Assembly. Additional nominations may be made by any six delegates concurring in writing, provided that each such nominee shall be proposed in opposition to a particular nominee of the Nominations Committee.
- e) Election shall be by ballot unless the Assembly shall otherwise determine.

#### 5. *Business Committee of the Assembly*

- a) **The Business Committee of the Assembly shall consist of the Moderator and Vice-Moderator or Vice-Moderators of the Central Committee, the General Secretary, the Presidents of the Council, the moderator or a member of the Assembly Planning Committee participating as a delegate, the moderators of hearings and committees who may appoint substitutes and ten delegates who are not members of the outgoing Central Committee, who shall be elected in accordance with Rule III.2. If the Moderator of the Assembly Planning Committee is not a delegate, he/she shall be invited as an advisor to the Assembly and its Business Committee with voice but without vote.**
- b) The Business Committee shall:
  - 1) coordinate the day-to-day business of the Assembly and may make proposals for rearrangement, modification, addition, deletion or substitution of items included on the agenda. Any such proposal shall be presented to the Assembly at the earliest convenient time by a member of the Business Committee with reasons for the proposed change. After opportunity for debate on the proposal, the Moderator shall put the following question to the Assembly: Shall the Assembly approve the proposal of the Business Committee? A majority of the delegates present and voting shall determine the question;
  - 2) consider any item of business or change in the agenda proposed by a delegate under Rule XVI.7;

- 3) determine whether the Assembly sits in general, business or deliberative session as defined in Rule XVI;
- 4) receive information from and review the reports of other committees in order to consider how best the Assembly can act on them.

6. *Other committees of the Assembly*

- a) Any other committee of the Assembly shall consist of such members and shall have such powers and duties as are proposed by the Central Committee at the first business session or by the Business Committee after its election and accepted by the Assembly.
- b) Any such committee shall, unless the Assembly otherwise directs, inform the Business Committee about its work and shall make its report or recommendations to the Assembly.

IV. CENTRAL COMMITTEE

1. *Membership*

- a) The Central Committee shall consist of ... not more than 150 members elected by the Assembly (see Constitution, Art. V.2(b)).
- b) Any member church, not already represented, may send one representative to the meetings of the Central Committee. Such a representative shall have the right to speak but not to vote.
- c) If a regularly elected member of the Central Committee is unable to attend a meeting, the church to which the absent member belongs shall have the right to send a substitute, provided that the substitute is ordinarily resident in the country where the absent member resides. Such a substitute shall have the right to speak and to vote. If a member, or his or her substitute, is absent without excuse for two consecutive meetings, the position shall be declared vacant, and the Central Committee shall fill the vacancy according to the provisions of Article V.2 (b) (3) of the Constitution.
- d) Moderators and Vice-Moderators of committees, *commissions* and boards who are not members of the Central Committee may attend meetings of the Central Committee and shall have the right to speak but not to vote.
- e) Advisers for the Central Committee may be appointed by the Executive Committee after consultation with the churches of which they are members. They shall have the right to speak but not to vote.



- f) Members of the staff of the World Council appointed by the Central Committee as specified under Rule IX.3 shall have the right to attend the sessions of the Central Committee unless on any occasion the Central Committee shall otherwise determine. When present they shall have the right to speak but not to vote.
- g) The newly elected Central Committee shall be convened by the General Secretary during or immediately after the meeting of the Assembly.

## 2. *Officers*

- a) The Central Committee shall elect from among its members a Moderator and a Vice-Moderator or Vice-Moderators to serve for such periods as it shall determine.
- b) The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches shall be ex officio secretary of the Central Committee.

## 3. *Nominations Committee of the Central Committee*

- a) The Central Committee shall elect a Nominations Committee which shall:
  - 1) ***nominate the Presidents of the World Council of Churches;***
  - 2) nominate persons from among the members of the Central Committee for the offices of Moderator and Vice-Moderator or Vice-Moderators of the Central Committee;
  - 3) nominate members of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee;
  - 4) nominate members of committees, *commissions* and boards and where appropriate their Moderators;
  - 5) make recommendations regarding the election of persons proposed for staff positions under Rule IX.3.

In making nominations as provided for by (1) to (4) above the Nominations Committee of the Central Committee shall have regard to principles set out in Rule III.4.(c) and, in applying principles 2, 3 and 4 to the nomination of members of committees, *commissions* and boards, shall consider the representative character of the combined membership of all such committees. Any member of the Central Committee may make additional nominations, provided that each such nominee shall be proposed in opposition to a particular nominee of the Nominations Committee.

- b) Election shall be by ballot unless the Committee shall otherwise determine.

## 4. *Meetings*

- a) The Central Committee shall ordinarily meet once every year. The Executive Committee may call an extraordinary meeting of the Central Committee whenever

it deems such a meeting desirable and shall do so upon the request in writing of one-third or more of the members of the Central Committee.

- b) The General Secretary shall take all possible steps to ensure that there be adequate representation present from each of the main confessions and from the main geographical areas of the membership of the World Council of Churches and of the major interests of the World Council.
- c) The Central Committee shall determine the date and place of its own meetings and of the meetings of the Assembly.

## 5. *Functions*

In exercising the powers set forth in the Constitution the Central Committee shall have the following specific functions:

- a) In the conduct of its business, the Central Committee shall elect the following committees:
  - 1) ***Programme Committee (a standing committee);***
  - 2) Finance Committee (a standing committee);
  - 3) Nominations Committee (appointed at each meeting);
  - 4) Reference Committee or Committees (appointed as needed at each meeting to advise the Central Committee on any other questions arising which call for special consideration or action by the Central Committee). ...
- b) It shall adopt the budget of the Council.
- c) It shall deal with matters referred to it by member churches.
- d) ***It shall determine the policies to be followed in the work of the World Council of Churches, including the task to initiate and terminate programmes and activities. It shall provide for the organisational structure to carry out the work mentioned herein before and to this end, amongst others, shall elect commissions and boards.***
- e) It shall report to the Assembly the actions it has taken during its period of office and shall not be discharged until its report has been received.

[Note: In accordance with Rule XVII amendments to Rule IV need to be confirmed by the Assembly. The amendments in *italics* in this Rule are therefore subject to confirmation by the Eighth Assembly in 1998.]



## V. PRESIDENTS

1. **The Central Committee at its first meeting after the Assembly shall elect Presidents of the World Council of Churches; the number of Presidents elected shall, however, not exceed 8; the role of the Presidents being to promote ecumenism and to interpret the work of the World Council of Churches, especially in their respective regions.**
2. **The term of office of Presidents shall end at the election of a new Central Committee.**
3. **A President shall be ineligible for election for a second consecutive term of office.**
4. **The Presidents should be persons whose ecumenical experience and standing is widely recognized among the WCC's ecumenical partners in their respective regions.**
5. **The Presidents shall be *ex officio* members of the Central Committee.**

## VI. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### 1. *Membership*

- a) **The Executive Committee shall consist of the Moderator and Vice-Moderator or Vice-Moderators of the Central Committee, the Moderators of Programme and Finance Committees of the Central Committee and 20 other members of the Central Committee.**
- b) If a member of the Executive Committee is unable to attend, he/she has the right - provided that the Moderator agrees - to send a member of the Central Committee as a substitute. Such a substitute shall - as far as possible - be of the same region and church family, and shall have the right to speak and to vote.
- c) The Moderator of the Central Committee shall also be the Moderator of the Executive Committee.
- d) The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches shall be *ex officio* the secretary of the Executive Committee.
- e) The officers may invite other persons to attend a meeting of the Executive Committee for consultation, always having in mind the need for preserving a due

balance of the confessions and of the geographical areas and cultural backgrounds, and of the major interests of the World Council.

## 2. *Functions*

- a) The Executive Committee shall be accountable to the Central Committee, and shall present to the Central Committee at its next meeting a report of its work for approval. The Central Committee shall consider such a report and take such action in regard to it as it thinks fit.
- b) **The Executive Committee shall be responsible to monitor and oversee the ongoing programmes and activities of the World Council of Churches including the task of determining the allocation of resources. The Executive Committee's power to make public statements is limited and defined in Rule X.5.**
- c) The Central Committee may by specific action provide for the election of staff to those positions specified in Rule IX.3A by the Executive Committee which should report these actions to the next meeting of the Central Committee.
- d) The Executive Committee shall supervise the operation of the budget and may, if necessary, impose limitations on expenditures.

## 3. *Elections*

- a) The Central Committee shall elect an Executive Committee at its first meeting **during or immediately** after the Assembly.
- b) Vacancies on the Executive Committee shall be filled by the next meeting of the Central Committee.

## VII. PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

1. **The Programme Committee shall consist of up to 40 members including**
  - a) **a Moderator who shall be a member of the Executive Committee;**
  - b) **not more than 30 Central Committee members of whom 2 shall also be members of the Executive Committee;**
  - c) **up to 10 members from among the moderators of commissions, boards and advisory groups.**
2. **The Programme Committee shall normally meet in conjunction with the Central Committee and shall be required to report to it regularly.**



3. **Within the guidelines established by the Assembly, the Programme Committee shall have the responsibility to make recommendations to the Central Committee on all matters regarding the programmes and activities of the World Council of Churches. In particular, it shall:**
- a) **ensure that the development of programmes takes account of the major thrusts and policies adopted by the Central Committee as well as of the available financial resources;**
  - b) **consider in particular the theological interrelationship of different WCC activities;**
  - c) **recommend to the Central Committee to initiate and terminate programmes and activities, as well as to make decisions on other basic questions of policy;**
  - d) **provide for and make recommendations for regular evaluation of programmes and activities;**
  - e) **recommend to the Central Committee the mandate and size of the commissions which are to advise the Central Committee through the Programme Committee in areas of constitutional responsibility of the Council;**
  - f) **recommend to the Central Committee the mandate and size of boards, in particular the Board of the Ecumenical Institute;**
  - g) **appoint other advisory groups for specific areas or constituencies, as required. The size and periodicity of meetings of such advisory groups are to be determined in light of the tasks assigned and the resources available.**

#### VIII. FINANCE COMMITTEE OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE

1. The Finance Committee of the Central Committee shall consist of not less than nine members, including:
  - a) a Moderator, who shall be a member of the Executive Committee;
  - b) five members, who shall be members of the Central Committee, two of whom shall also be members of the Executive Committee;
  - c) **three members, to be designated by the Programme Committee from its membership. The Programme Committee may designate alternates who may attend if the principal member is unable to be present.**
2. The Committee shall have the following responsibilities and duties:
  - a) To present to the Central Committee:
    - 1) in respect of the expired calendar year, an account of income and expenditure of all operations of the World Council of Churches and the balance sheet of the

World Council of Churches at the end of that year and its recommendation, based on review of the report of the auditors, regarding approval and granting of discharge in respect of the accounts of the World Council of Churches for the completed period;

- 2) in respect of the current year, a review of all financial operations;
- 3) in respect of the succeeding calendar year, a budget covering all activities of the World Council of Churches and its recommendations regarding the approval of that budget in the light of its judgment as to the adequacy of the provisions made for the expenditure involved in the proposed programme of activities and the adequacy of reasonably foreseeable income to finance the budget; and
- 4) in respect of the year next following the succeeding calendar year a **financial forecast** together with recommendations thereon as in (3) above.

b) To consider and make recommendations to the Central Committee on all financial questions concerning the affairs of the World Council of Churches, such as:

- 1) the appointment of the auditor or auditors who shall be appointed annually by the Central Committee and shall be eligible for reappointment;
- 2) accounting procedures;
- 3) investment policy and procedures;
- 4) the basis of calculation of contributions from member churches;
- 5) procedures and methods of raising funds.

## IX. STAFF

1. The Central Committee shall elect or appoint or provide for the election or appointment of persons of special competence to conduct the continuing operations of the World Council. These persons collectively constitute the staff.
2. The General Secretary shall be elected by the Central Committee. He or she is the chief executive officer of the World Council. As such he or she is the head of the staff. When the position of General Secretary becomes vacant, the Executive Committee shall appoint an acting General Secretary.
- 3.A. **In addition to the General Secretary, the Central Committee shall itself elect one or more Deputy General Secretaries, and the Directors of the clusters.**
- 3.B. The Executive Committee shall elect all other staff in grades 7-10 and shall report its actions to the Central Committee.
4. **The Staff Leadership Group shall consist of the General Secretary (Moderator), the Deputy General Secretary or Secretaries, the Assistant to**



**the General Secretary (Secretary), and the Directors of the four clusters (with substitutes when they are absent). Other staff may be coopted or invited for special expertise, balance or familiarity with a specific item on the agenda. The cluster Directors will be responsible to keep staff in their clusters regularly informed of discussions and decisions made by the group.**

**The Staff Leadership Group is the chief internal management team. Its overall responsibility is to advise the General Secretary in his/her role as chief executive officer of the Council. It has the task of ensuring that all activities of the Council are carried out in an integrated and cohesive manner. For this purpose it will:**

- a) implement policies and priorities established by the Central Committee and Executive Committee and facilitate proposals to be submitted to them;
  - b) provide overall coordination, decide on priorities and direction of the Council's activities;
  - c) assist the General Secretary in the long-range planning, management and evaluation of activities;
  - d) assist the General Secretary in the appointment of staff and other groups;
  - e) manage and allocate human and financial resources and ensure that programme planning is integrated with anticipated resources available.
  - f) appoint ad hoc or permanent functional staff groups to advise on specific areas of management.**
5. **There shall be a Staff Consultative Group. Its membership shall include *ex officio* the members of the Staff Leadership Group and the team coordinators. It shall meet regularly (normally once a month); it shall be moderated by a Deputy General Secretary and its meetings shall be open to all staff members.**

**The Staff Consultative Group shall advise the General Secretary and the Staff Leadership Group. Its purpose is to:**

- a) provide a broad-based forum for the sharing of information and the discussion and interpretation of policies and issues;
- b) promote creative reflection on new issues and concerns as well as evaluation of WCC activities;
- c) provide feedback to the General Secretariat regarding the ongoing work of the Council;
- d) facilitate an ongoing evaluation of activities, processes and mechanisms;
- e) seek to develop a spirit and style of work to strengthen and promote integration, cooperation and collegiality;

**f) assist the General Secretary in matters related to the working environment and the well-being and satisfaction of staff members.**

6. The normal terms of appointment for the General Secretary and for the Deputy... **General Secretary or Secretaries shall be five years.** Unless some other period is stated in the resolution making the appointment, the first term of office for all other staff appointed by the Executive or Central Committee shall normally be four years from the date of the appointment. All appointments shall be reviewed one year before their expiration.

Retirement shall normally be at sixty-five for both men and women or not later than the end of the year in which a staff member reaches the age of sixty-eight.

## X. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

1. In the performance of its functions, the Council through its Assembly or through its Central Committee may **issue statements on any situation or concern** with which the Council or its constituent churches may be confronted.
2. While such statements may have great significance and influence as the expression of the judgment or concern of so widely representative a Christian body, yet their authority will consist only in the weight which they carry by their own truth and wisdom, and the publishing of such statements shall not be held to imply that the World Council as such has, or can have, any constitutional authority over the constituent churches or right to speak for them.
3. **Any commission may recommend statements to the Assembly or to the Central Committee for its consideration and action.**
4. **When, in the judgment of a commission, a statement should be issued before approval of the Assembly or Central Committee can be obtained, it may do so provided the statement relates to matters within its own field of concern and action, has the approval of the Moderator of the Central Committee and the General Secretary, and the commission makes clear that neither the World Council of Churches nor any of its member churches is committed by the statement.**
5. Between meetings of the Central Committee, when in their judgment the situation requires, a statement may be issued, provided that such statements are not contrary to the established policy of the Council, by:
  - 1) the Executive Committee when meeting apart from the sessions of the Central Committee; or



- 2) the Moderator and Vice-Moderator or Vice-Moderators of the Central Committee and the General Secretary acting together; or
- 3) the Moderator of the Central Committee or the General Secretary on his or her own authority respectively.

## XI. ASSOCIATE COUNCILS

1. Any national Christian council, national council of churches or national ecumenical council, established for purposes of ecumenical fellowship and activity, may be recognized by the Central Committee as an associate council, provided:
  - a) the applicant council, knowing the Basis upon which the World Council is founded, expresses its desire to cooperate with the World Council towards the achievement of one or more of the functions and purposes of this Council; and
  - b) the member churches of the World Council in the area have been consulted prior to the action.
2. Each associate council:
  - a) shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the Assembly;
  - b) may, at the discretion of the Central Committee, be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the Central Committee; and
  - c) shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.
3. In addition to communicating directly with its member churches, the World Council shall inform each associate council regarding important ecumenical developments and consult it regarding proposed World Council programmes in its country.
4. In consultation with the associate councils, the Central Committee shall establish and review from time to time guidelines regarding the relationships between the WCC and national councils of churches.

## XII. REGIONAL ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS

1. The World Council recognizes regional ecumenical organisations as essential partners in the ecumenical enterprise.
2. Such regional ecumenical organisations as may be designated by the Central Committee:

- a) shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the Assembly;
  - b) shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the Central Committee; and
  - c) shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the World Council of Churches.
3. In addition to communicating directly with its member churches, the World Council shall inform each of these regional ecumenical organisations regarding important ecumenical developments and consult it regarding proposed World Council programmes in its region.
  4. The Central Committee, together with the regional ecumenical organisations, shall establish and review as appropriate guiding principles for relationships and cooperation between the World Council and regional ecumenical organisations, including the means whereby programmatic responsibilities could be shared among them.

### XIII. CHRISTIAN WORLD COMMUNIONS

1. The World Council of Churches recognizes the role of Christian World Communions or world confessional bodies in the ecumenical movement.
2. Such Christian World Communions as may be designated by the Central Committee and which express their desire to this effect:
  - a) shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the Assembly; and
  - b) shall be invited to send an adviser to meetings of the Central Committee; and
  - c) shall be provided with copies of all general communications sent to all member churches of the WCC; and
3. The Central Committee shall establish and review as appropriate guidelines for relationships and cooperation with Christian World Communions.

### XIV. INTERNATIONAL ECUMENICAL ORGANISATIONS

1. Ecumenical organisations other than those mentioned under Rules XI, XII and XIII may be recognized by the Central Committee as organisations with which the World Council has working relationships, provided:
  - a) the organisation is international in nature (global, regional or sub-regional) and its objectives are consistent with the functions and purposes of the WCC; and
  - b) the organisation, knowing the Basis upon which the WCC is founded, expresses its desire to relate to and cooperate with the WCC.



2. On the basis of reciprocity, each international ecumenical organisation:
  - a) shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the Assembly (cf. Rule III.1.b.5);
  - b) shall be provided with copies of general communications sent to all member churches of the WCC.

## XV. LEGAL PROVISIONS

1. The duration of the Council is unlimited.
2. The legal headquarters of the Council shall be at Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland. It is registered in Geneva as an association according to Art. 60ff. of the Swiss Civil Code. Regional offices may be organized in different parts of the world by decision of the Central Committee.
3. The World Council of Churches is legally represented by its Executive Committee or by such persons as may be empowered by the Executive Committee to represent it.
4. The World Council shall be legally bound by the joint signatures of two of the following persons: ... the Moderator and Vice-Moderator or Vice-Moderators of the Central Committee, the General Secretary, the Deputy General **Secretary or Secretaries**..... Any two of the above-named persons shall have power to authorize other persons, chosen by them, to act jointly or singly on behalf of the World Council of Churches in fields circumscribed in the power of attorney.
5. The Council shall obtain the means necessary for the pursuance of its work from the contributions of its member churches and from donations or bequests.
6. The Council shall not pursue commercial functions but it shall have the right to act as an agency of interchurch aid and to publish literature in connection with its aims. It is not entitled to distribute any surplus income by way of profit or bonus among its members.
7. Members of the governing bodies of the Council or of the Assembly shall have no personal liability with regard to the obligations or commitments of the Council. The commitments entered upon by the Council are guaranteed solely by its own assets.

## XVI. RULES OF DEBATE

### 1. *Categories of session*

The Assembly shall sit either in general session (see Rule XVI.4), in business session (see Rule XVI.5), or in deliberative session (see Rule XVI.6). The Business Committee shall determine the category of session appropriate to the matters to be considered.

### 2. *Presiding officers*

The presiding officers shall be proposed by the Central Committee at the first business session and by the Business Committee after its election.

- a) In general session one of the Presidents or the Moderator of the Central Committee shall preside.
- b) In business session the Moderator or a Vice-Moderator of the Central Committee or some other member of the Central Committee shall preside.
- c) In deliberative session one of the Presidents, the Moderator or a Vice-Moderator of the Central Committee or a delegate shall preside.

### 3. *Formal responsibilities of the Moderator*

The Moderator shall announce the opening, suspension or adjournment of the Assembly, and shall announce at the beginning of every session, and at any point where the category changes, that the Assembly is in general or business or deliberative session.

### 4. *General session*

The Assembly shall sit in general session for ceremonial occasions, public acts of witness and formal addresses. Only matters proposed by the Central Committee or by the Business Committee after its election shall be considered.

### 5. *Business session*

The Assembly shall sit in business session when any of the following types of business are to be considered: adoption of the agenda presented by the Central Committee, any proposal for change in the agenda, nominations, elections, proposals with reference to the structure, organization, budget or programme of the World Council of Churches, or any other business requiring action by the Assembly, except as provided in paragraphs 4 and 6 of this Rule. The Rules of Debate applicable to a business session are:



a) Moderator

The Moderator shall seek to achieve the orderly and responsible despatch of business. He or she shall seek so far as possible to give fair and reasonable opportunity for differing views to be expressed. He or she shall ensure good order and the observance of the appropriate Rules of Debate and shall seek to ensure relevance and prevent repetition. To those ends the Moderator may request a speaker to move to another point or cease speaking. The Moderator shall grant the right to speak and determine the order of speakers. His or her decision is final in all matters except as to his or her decision on a point of order under paragraph (u) below or his or her announcement as to the sense of the meeting on an issue, under paragraph (l) below or as to the result of voting under paragraphs (n) and (o) below.

b) Speaking

Any person desiring to speak shall do so only when granted the right by the Moderator. The speaker shall state his or her name and church and address his or her remarks to the Moderator. A delegate may speak only to propose or second a motion or amendment, to engage in the debate or to state a point of order or procedure and any other speaker only to engage in debate or to state a point of procedure. Any speaker shall normally give notice of his or her desire to speak to the Moderator, either prior to the session or by sending a note to the Moderator through one of the stewards and the Moderator shall have regard to such notice, but the Moderator remains free to grant the right to speak and determine the order of speakers under paragraph (a) of this Rule.

c) Proposing a motion

A delegate who desires to propose any motion arising from business on the agenda shall state it orally and, except in the case of a privileged motion or motion under paragraphs (j) or (k) of this Rule, shall furnish a written copy to the Moderator. A delegate who desires to propose an item of new business shall follow the procedure set out in Rule XVI.7.

d) Seconding a motion

A motion shall not be considered by the Assembly until it is seconded by a delegate. When a motion has been seconded it may not be withdrawn except with the general consent of the delegates present and voting. If general consent is given for withdrawal any delegate may then require the motion to be put in his or her own name.

e) Debate

When a motion has been seconded, the debate upon it shall be opened by the delegate who proposed the motion. That delegate may speak for not more than five

minutes. That speech shall be followed by a delegate speaking in opposition to the motion who may speak for not more than five minutes. After that the speakers shall alternate as far as the nature of the business allows between those who favour and those who oppose the motion. Each may speak for not more than five minutes. When the debate is closed, the delegate who proposed the motion may reply, but shall speak for not more than three minutes. No other speaker may speak more than once on the motion.

f) Amendment

Any delegate may propose an amendment to a motion in the same manner as a motion. Paragraphs (c), (d) and (e) of this Rule shall apply to an amendment as they apply to a motion. The debate on an amendment shall be limited to the amendment. The proposer of the motion shall be given the opportunity to speak in the debate on an amendment. The Moderator shall rule out of order and not receive an amendment which is substantially the negative of the motion being debated.

g) Amendment to an amendment

Any delegate may propose an amendment to an amendment in the same manner as an amendment, but the Moderator shall rule out of order and not receive an amendment to an amendment to an amendment. Paragraphs (c), (d), (e) and (f) of this Rule shall apply to an amendment to an amendment as they apply to an amendment.

h) Debate and voting on amendments

The debate and vote shall be first upon the amendment to the amendment then upon the amendment, and finally upon the motion. When an amendment to an amendment or an amendment has been voted upon, an additional amendment to the amendment or an amendment may be proposed, but the Moderator shall rule out of order and not receive an amendment to an amendment or an amendment substantially to the same effect as one already voted upon.

i) Rights of Moderator to take part in a debate

The Moderator shall not propose a motion or amendment or participate in debate without handing over his or her duties to another presiding officer and shall not, after that, preside again until that matter of business has been decided.

j) Privileged motions

Any delegate who has not previously spoken on a motion or amendment may move at any time, but not so as to interrupt a speaker, one of the following privileged motions, which shall take precedence over pending business, and shall have priority in the order listed, the motion with the highest priority being listed first:



1) To recess or to adjourn

If the Assembly decides to recess or adjourn, the matter pending at recess or adjournment shall be taken up when the Assembly reconvenes, unless there is an "order of the day" at that time, in which event the matter pending at recess or adjournment shall be taken up at the conclusion of the "order of the day" or at such time as the Business Committee proposes.

2) That the question not be put

If the Assembly agrees that the question shall not be put, it shall pass to the next business without taking a vote or decision.

3) To postpone to a time specified

When a matter is postponed to a time specified, it becomes the "order of the day" for that time and takes precedence over all other business.

4) To refer to a committee

When a matter is referred to a committee, the committee shall report on it during the meeting of the Assembly unless the Assembly itself directs otherwise.

Once a privileged motion has been seconded, a vote on it shall be taken immediately without debate.

k) Motion to close debate

Any delegate may propose a motion to close debate at any time but not so as to interrupt another speaker. If seconded, a vote shall be taken immediately without debate on the following question: Shall debate on the pending motion (or amendment) be closed? If two-thirds of the delegates present and voting agree, a vote shall be taken immediately without further debate on the pending motion (or amendment). After the vote on a pending amendment to an amendment, or on a pending amendment, the debate shall continue on the amendment or on the main motion as the case may be. A further motion to close debate can be made on any business then pending. If a motion to close debate is proposed and seconded on the main motion, before the vote is taken on that motion, the Assembly shall be informed of the names of delegates wishing to speak and any amendments remaining and the Moderator may ask the members of the Assembly for a show of hands of any wishing to speak.

l) Sense of the meeting

The Moderator shall seek to understand the sense of the meeting on a pending matter and may announce it without taking a vote. Any delegate may challenge the Moderator's decision on the sense of the meeting, and the Moderator may then either put the matter to the vote under paragraph (n) below or allow further discussion and again announce the sense of the meeting.

- m) Moderator to put question  
The Moderator shall put each matter not otherwise decided to a vote.
- n) Voting - by show of hands  
At the end of a debate, the Moderator shall read the motion or amendment and shall seek to ensure that delegates understand the matter upon which the vote is to be taken. Voting shall ordinarily be by show of hands. The Moderator shall first ask those in favour to vote; then those opposing; then those who abstain from voting. The Moderator shall then announce the result.
- o) Voting - by count or secret written ballot  
If the Moderator is in doubt, or for any other reason decides to do so, or if any delegate demands it, a vote on the matter shall be taken immediately by count on a show of hands or by standing. The Moderator may appoint tellers to count those voting and abstaining. Any delegate may propose that the Assembly vote on any matter by secret written ballot, and if seconded and a majority of the delegates present and voting agree, a secret written ballot shall be taken. The Moderator shall announce the result of any count or secret written ballot.
- p) Results of voting  
A majority of the delegates present and voting shall determine any matter unless a higher proportion is required by the Constitution or these Rules. If the vote results in a tie, the matter shall be regarded as defeated. The number of those abstaining from voting however numerous shall have no effect on the result of the vote.
- q) Voting by Moderator  
Any Moderator entitled to vote may vote in a secret written ballot, or any vote by show of hands or standing, or may vote if the vote results in a tie, but in no case shall he or she vote more than once.
- r) Reconsideration  
Any two delegates who previously voted with the majority on any matter which has been voted upon may request the Business Committee to propose to the Assembly that that matter be reconsidered. The Business Committee may agree with or refuse that request, but if they refuse, those delegates may follow the procedure set out in Rule XVI.7, except that a matter shall not be reconsidered unless two-thirds of the delegates present and voting concur in the reconsideration.
- s) Dissent and abstention  
Any delegate voting with the minority or abstaining may have his or her name recorded.



t) Point of order or procedure

Any delegate may raise a point of order or procedure and may, if necessary, interrupt another delegate to do so. As a point of order, a delegate may only assert that the procedure being followed is not in accordance with these Rules. As a point of procedure, a speaker may only ask for clarification of the pending matter.

u) Appeal against Moderator's decision

Any delegate may appeal the decision of the Moderator concerning a point of order, as defined in paragraph (t). If such an appeal is made the Moderator shall put the following question to the Assembly without further debate: Shall the Assembly concur in the decision of the Moderator? A majority of the delegates present and voting shall determine the appeal.

v) Time limits

The Moderator may, at his or her discretion, allow extra time to any speaker if the Moderator believes that injustice may be done to a member through difficulty of language or translation, or for any other reason, or because of the complexity of the matter under debate.

6. *Deliberative session*

The Assembly shall sit in deliberative session when the matters before it are of such a theological or general policy nature that detailed amendment is impracticable. Reports of sections shall be discussed in deliberative session. Any committee or other body reporting may recommend to the Business Committee that its report be considered in deliberative session.

The Rules of Debate applicable to a deliberative session are the same as those for a business session, except that the following additional rules shall apply:

a) Motions permitted

In addition to privileged motions or the motion to close debate, under paragraphs 5 (j) and (k), the only motion which may be proposed regarding matters to be considered in a deliberative session are:

- 1) to approve the substance of the report and commend it to the churches for study and appropriate action;
- 2) to refer to the body reporting with instructions to consider whether a new or different emphasis or emphases shall be incorporated in the report;
- 3) to instruct the body reporting to provide, in consultation with the Business Committee, for an open hearing on the report before reporting again.

b) Matters concerning ecclesiological self-understanding

Where a matter being raised is considered by a member to go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of his or her church, he or she may request that it not be put to the vote. The Moderator will in such a case seek the advice of the Business Committee or the Executive Committee in consultation with this member and other members of the same church or confession present at the session. If there is consensus that the matter does in fact go against the ecclesiological self-understanding of the member, the Moderator will announce that the matter be dealt with in deliberative session without vote. The materials and minutes of the discussion will be sent to the churches for their study and comment.

c) Speaking

Any person presenting a report may also speak in the debate for purposes of clarification or explanation if the Moderator allows him or her to do so.

7. *New business or change in the agenda*

Any delegate to the Assembly may propose an item of business to be included on, or any change in, the agenda. If after consideration the Business Committee after its election has not agreed to the proposal, he or she may appeal the decision to the Moderator in writing. The Moderator shall at a convenient time inform the Assembly of the proposal, and a member of the Business Committee shall explain the reasons for this refusal. The delegate may then give the reasons for its acceptance. The Moderator shall then without further debate put the following question to the Assembly: Shall the Assembly accept this proposal? A majority of the delegates present and voting shall decide. If the Assembly votes to accept the proposal the Business Committee shall bring as soon as possible recommendations for the inclusion of the item of business or for the change in the agenda.

8. *Languages*

The working languages in use in the World Council of Churches are English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. The General Secretary shall make reasonable effort to provide interpretation from any one of those languages into the others. A speaker may speak in another language only if he or she provides for interpretation into one of the working languages. The General Secretary shall provide all possible assistance to any speaker requiring an interpreter.

9. *Suspension of rules*

Any delegate may propose that any Rule of Debate may be suspended. If seconded, the rule shall be suspended only by vote of two-thirds of the delegates present and voting.



### 10. *Central Committee*

The Central Committee shall sit in business session, unless it decides to sit in general or deliberative session, and shall follow the appropriate Rules of Debate for that category of session as are applied in the Assembly, except insofar as the Central Committee may decide otherwise.

## XVII. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these Rules may be moved at any session of the Assembly or at any session of the Central Committee by any member and may be adopted by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, except that no alteration in Rules I, IV and XVII shall come into effect until it has been confirmed by the Assembly. Notice of a proposal to make any such amendment shall be given in writing at least twenty-four hours before the session of the Assembly or Central Committee at which it is to be moved.

## OUR ECUMENICAL VISION

Jesus Christ, who has called us to be one, is in our midst!  
As Christians from every part of the world, we give thanks  
that the triune God has drawn our churches closer together  
in faith and life, witness and service.

We celebrate the 50th anniversary of the World Council of Churches —  
“a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God  
and Saviour  
according to the scriptures  
and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling  
to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit”.

*Receiving the legacy of those who have gone before us:*

We are drawn by the vision of a church  
that will bring all people into communion with God and  
with one another,  
professing one baptism,  
celebrating one holy communion,  
and acknowledging a common ministry.

We are drawn by the vision of a church  
which will express its unity by confessing the apostolic faith,  
living in conciliar fellowship,  
acting together in mutual accountability.

We are challenged by the vision of a church  
that will reach out to everyone,  
sharing,  
caring,  
proclaiming the good news of God's redemption,  
a sign of the kingdom and a servant of the world.



We are challenged by the vision of a church,  
 the people of God on the way together,  
 confronting all divisions of race, gender, age or culture,  
 striving to realize justice and peace,  
 upholding the integrity of creation.

*Affirming anew that our task is to embody, here and now,  
 the vision of what God's people are called to be:*

We journey together as a people freed by God's forgiveness.  
 In the midst of the brokenness of the world,  
 we proclaim the good news of reconciliation, healing and  
 justice in Christ.

We journey together as a people with resurrection faith.  
 In the midst of exclusion and despair,  
 we embrace, in joy and hope, the promise of life in all its fullness.

We journey together as a people of prayer.  
 In the midst of confusion and loss of identity,  
 we discern signs of God's purpose being fulfilled  
 and expect the coming of God's reign.

*Therefore, this is our vision for the ecumenical movement:*

We long for the visible oneness of the body of Christ,  
 affirming the gifts of all,  
 young and old, women and men, lay and ordained.

We expect the healing of human community,  
 the wholeness of God's entire creation.

We trust in the liberating power of forgiveness,  
 transforming enmity into friendship  
 and breaking the spiral of violence.

We open ourselves for a culture of dialogue and solidarity,  
 sharing life with strangers  
 and seeking encounter with those of other faiths.

*This is our commitment:*

*We intend to stay together and are restless to grow together in unity.*

We respond to the prayer of Jesus Christ  
that all may be one in order that the world may believe (John 17:21).  
We are sustained by the assurance  
that in God's purpose all things shall be united in Christ —  
things in heaven and things on earth (Ephesians 1:10).

*We affirm that what unites us is stronger than what separates us.*

Neither failures nor uncertainties  
neither fears nor threats  
will weaken our intention to continue to walk together on the way to unity,  
welcoming those who would join us on this journey,  
widening our common vision  
discovering new ways of witnessing and acting together in faith.

*We recommit ourselves in this 50th anniversary year to strengthen the World Council of Churches*

as a truly ecumenical fellowship,  
fulfilling the purposes for which it was founded —  
to the glory of the triune God.

*Prayer*

God of unity, God of love,  
what we say with our lips, make strong in our hearts,  
what we affirm with our minds, make vivid in our lives.  
Send us your Spirit  
to pray in us what we dare not pray,  
to claim us beyond our own claims,  
to bind us when we are tempted to go our own ways.  
Lead us forward.  
Lead us together.  
Lead us to do your will,  
the will of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*(Text as approved by the Executive Committee, February 1998)*





